

Non-aligned ministers to meet

NICOSIA (R) — Foreign ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) will meet in Belgrade next month to discuss an initiative to end the Gulf war, Indian Foreign Minister Vidyut Chandra Shukla was quoted as saying Saturday. The Iranian news agency IRNA said Mr. Shukla made the announcement to reporters before leaving Tehran at the end of a 24-hour visit. It gave no further details. Earlier Saturday, Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said NAM should act quickly to halt the war between Iraq and U.S.-led multinational forces trying to drive Iraqi troops out of Kuwait. "We are fully prepared to cooperate in this regard so that we may stop this unequal war," IRNA quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as saying. Mr. Shukla, whose country is among the founders of the 102-nation NAM, said Iraq should withdraw its forces from Kuwait. "We are against the presence of alien forces in the region," he told Mr. Rafsanjani. Iran, Iraq and Kuwait are members of the Non-Aligned Movement, founded 30 years ago to counterbalance eastern and Western blocs.

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جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Katuyshas fall in Israel's 'security zone'

TYRE, Lebanon (AP) — Guerrillas fired two Katyusha rockets on Israel's self-proclaimed "security zone" in South Lebanon Saturday, the first anti-Israeli attack since the Gulf war erupted. But the projectiles exploded near U.N. peacekeeping forces, apparently missing their target, police said. They reported no casualties. A police spokesman said the rockets were fired at 3 a.m. (2400 GMT) from the vicinity of the Palestinian refugee camp of Rashidiyeh near Tyre. One of the rockets exploded in a forest in the village of Majdel Zun in the Nepal zone of operations, said the spokesman. He said the second projectile exploded in the air over a Filijian position on the main road between Tyre and the border town of Naqoura. "The rockets were the first anti-Israeli Katyusha attacks since the war in the Gulf broke out," said the spokesman. Israel carved out the security zone, "in 1985 after it withdrew the bulk of its occupation army from the region, ending a three-year invasion."

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Iraqi missiles hit Tel Aviv, Riyadh

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQ Saturday night fired more of its Scud missiles on both Israel and Saudi Arabia. The Iraqi missiles were fired at Israel for the sixth time Saturday, and U.S.-made Patriots were launched to defend the Jewish state. There apparently were two

separate barrages of incoming missiles.

Sirens sounded throughout Israel at 10 p.m. (2000 GMT) and again at 10:20 p.m., indicating a second attack. The all-clear was given at about 10:45 p.m. to all areas of the country except Tel Aviv and Haifa. An army spokesman told the

radio that "several Iraqi missiles

were launched at Israel" and a few Patriots were fired in response. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage. Israel television showed two Patriots being fired. Israel radio quoted the U.S. Defense Department as saying four Iraqi missiles

were fired — three at the Haifa

area and one toward Tel Aviv. An Israeli radio reporter in northern Israel said he saw a Patriot anti-missile missile collide with an Iraqi Scud in midair. Reporters in central Israel heard a few explosions but it was not clear what caused them. Israelis waited out the attack in

gas masks in rooms with windows

sealed with plastic to protect against chemical weapons. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has repeatedly threatened to hit Israel once the U.S. and its allies in the Gulf started war. Five minutes after the second siren sounded, the spokesman told residents from Jerusalem and

southwards they could take off

their masks and come out of the sealed rooms but warned them to stay in their homes. At 10:45 p.m. (20:45 GMT) an all-clear siren sounded throughout Israel. The radio said all residents could now come out of their sealed rooms. The spokesman said on the

radio that he had no reports of

injuries as yet. In the Saudi capital, Riyadh a U.S. Patriot missile was fired at an incoming Iraqi Scud rocket also Saturday evening, apparently hitting the Iraqi missile, witnesses said. Witnesses in Riyadh reported seeing a Patriot fired and striking

the Iraqi missile at about 11 p.m.

(2000 GMT). The debris fell on the edge of the city, they said. There were no immediate reports of injuries. Air raid sirens also were sounded in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. As of Saturday, more than two

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Part of Gulf oil slick ablaze

Tens of thousands stage anti-war protests

Combined agency dispatches

TENS OF THOUSANDS of protesters converged on Washington and Bonn Saturday to march calling for an end to the Gulf war. Under cold, clear skies and carrying signs that read "Support our soldiers by bringing them home" and "no war for oil," the American crowd planned to march to the White House. Organizers said they were expecting 50,000 to 70,000 marchers, far exceeding last weekend's 15,000 turnout. Police had no early estimates on the size of the rally.

In San Francisco an even larger demonstration was planned. Organizers were preparing for up to 250,000 people, which they said would be the biggest anti-war rally in the city since the Vietnam war. About 60,000 mounted an anti-war rally there last weekend.

A counter-demonstration in support of U.S. forces in the Gulf war also was planned in San Francisco one kilometre away from the anti-war rally.

On this side of the Atlantic, up to 150,000 people, beating drums and waving banners painted with peace doves, streamed into Bonn from across the nation in Germany's biggest demonstration yet against the Gulf war.

The nation's leaders again warned against anti-Americanism, as Germany struggles with pacifist tendencies and guilty feelings over its image as a feeble supporter of the war.

"To hell with Bush and Saddam. The people want peace," read a huge banner fluttering on the immense lawn in front of Bonn University, where legions of demonstrators gathered for a rally.

Rally speakers, like Lutheran Bishop Gottfried Forck of Berlin, insisted their anti-war demonstration does not make them anti-American.

"Our opponent is not America, but the negligence of American policies and their influence on the United Nations," said Bishop Forck.

Hans-Werner Meyer, chairman of the powerful German trade union federation, also said anti-war protests cannot be equated with anti-Americanism.

A few pro-American placards were waved in the crowd, as were a number of Israeli flags.

But there were also banners like "Grenada, Panama, Iraq — This is America's bloody peace order."

Many of the banners and placards demanded a ceasefire, and a Middle East peace conference to create a Palestinian homeland.

Across the university quad, on a downtown square, about 300 people staged a rally supporting the United States, Israel and the U.S.-led deployment.

Many of those demonstrators denounced what they said was Germany's feeble support for the Gulf war.

Organisers said between 50,000 and 200,000 people were

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Drinking water fears hit Gulf states; allies ponder problem

Combined agency dispatches

PART OF A HUGE oil slick spreading down the Gulf from Kuwait along the coast of Saudi Arabia is on fire, military sources said Saturday.

Two oil rigs in the slick and an oil terminal were also burning and there was a fire on Faylakah Island off Kuwait.

The sources in London said the allies had proof that the Iraqis were deliberately pumping the oil into the sea from Kuwait but could not give details or say how the fires started.

Urgent consultations on how to stop the oil being pumped out to sea were being held between Saudi, U.S. and British officials. Iraq is in possession of Kuwait's main oil storage and loading terminal. It is from there that the allies say millions of gallons of oil are being pumped.

The military source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said

he could not elaborate on the size

of the fire. The United States has accused Iraq of "environmental terrorism" for allegedly dumping Kuwaiti crude oil into the Gulf.

U.S. military officials said in Riyadh Saturday that the slick was about 50 kilometres long and 11 kilometres wide and spreading.

The sources in London said a "small portion" of the spill was burning.

There has been speculation that Iraq may want to set the oil ablaze to hinder an amphibious assault on the beaches of Kuwait.

The sources said crude oil became more difficult to set ablaze the longer it remained in the water.

Military sources said that while an oil slick could add to the difficulties of any allied amphibious landing on Kuwait, mine-hunter vessels could continue to operate and other naval ships

could operate without difficulty.

They said Iraq was likely to have laid mines around the approaches of Kuwait City, along the Kuwait coast and in the approaches to the Iraqi coast.

Three types of mines had to be neutralised — ground mines on the seabed, mines tethered to the seabed and floating just below the surface, and tethered mines floating free after their cables had broken.

Minehunting operations using sonar could continue despite the slick, the sources said.

The oil slick is threatening the region's drinking water supplies.

U.S. military officials said water for hundreds of thousands of troops deployed in the kingdom for Operation Desert Storm against Iraq would not be affected. They drank bottled water from underground sources.

Iraq said U.S. planes caused

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Iran Gulf war planes landing in the country will be kept

NICOSIA (Agency) — Iran said Saturday aircraft from either side in the Gulf war landing on its territory would be seized and held until the conflict ended.

Iran's Supreme National Security Council, quoted by the Iranian news agency IRNA, made the statement just hours after announcing that seven Iraqi fighter planes had landed in the country.

Iran reported that seven Iraqi warplanes made emergency landings in Iranian air fields, and that one of them exploded on touch down.

Iraq acknowledged that "seven aircraft were forced to land in Iran," and the contacts were under way to secure the return of the aircraft and their crews. It did not say what prompted the pilots to fly to Iran or disclose the number and type of the aircraft involved.

The Iranian council announced that "any aircraft from either side

in the war that makes an emergency landing in Iran will be confiscated until the end of the war."

Baghdad radio quoted a military spokesman as saying Iraqi planes were "forced to land in Iran."

The spokesman did not explain what "forced" the planes to land in Iran.

"Several of our planes on the night of Jan. 25-26 were forced to land in Iran. Contacts are being carried out in accordance with internationally accepted norms to ensure the return of the pilots and the planes to their homeland," the spokesman said.

Tehran radio earlier reported that the seven Iraqi planes, including two that were damaged, came in three groups and were intercepted by Iranian fighters and escorted to Iranian air fields.

The pilots of the Iraqi aircraft were being questioned by Iranian

authorities, said the radio.

The radio did not say if any of the pilot were injured, where the planes landed or give any other details.

It said Iran had warned Iraq and the other countries fighting in the Gulf war that it is neutral and will counter any attempt to violate that neutrality.

On Friday, the Iranian president said it would be suicide for his country to side with Iraq in its bid to hold on to Kuwait.

Iranian hardliners want Iran to join a jihad against the U.S.-led forces which started attacking Iraqi positions last Thursday.

After Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait, Baghdad quickly offered a formal end to the Iran-Iraq war, settling their territorial disputes.

The offer enabled it to free hundreds of thousands of troops on the Iran border and deploy them in southern Iraq and Kuwait.

Baghdad urges Arab soldiers to abandon U.S.-led alliance

Combined agency dispatches

BAGHDAD RADIO highlighted Iraq's overnight Scud missile attacks on Israel and Saudi Arabia. It also urged Arab soldiers Saturday to abandon the U.S.-led multinational coalition and come over to the Iraq side.

A military communique, carried by the radio said Iraqi air defenders downed five more allied warplanes Saturday. The allies have acknowledged the loss

of 22 planes, 18 of them in combat.

The Iraqis say they have downed more than 180 allied aircraft. "The men of our land and air defences managed to shoot down five air targets, including aircraft and missiles," said the 24th armed forces communique, carried by Baghdad Radio.

"The enemy air force launched 113 raids on our sectors of combat operations and civilian areas in other parts."

"They found nothing to compen-

sate for their failure and defeat

other than carrying on with their raids against civilians." The 23rd communique, released on Saturday, had put the number of allied raids against Iraq at 87. It said two planes were shot down.

U.S. fighter pilots shot down three Iraqi MiGs over Iraq in the past 24 hours, the U.S. government said Saturday.

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Ben Ali calls for Security Council action

TUNIS (AP) — President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali urged the U.N. Security Council Saturday to order a ceasefire in the Gulf war, saying the U.S.-led alliance has exceeded its mandate to expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

In a nationally broadcast address, Mr. Ben Ali said he was "scandalised" at the failure of all Arabs to rally around Iraq.

Allied warplanes have attacked numerous targets in Iraq and Kuwait since Jan. 17, after Baghdad ignored Security Council resolutions demanding an end to the occupation of Kuwait.

The Security Council authorised the use of force to expel Iraqi troops. Mr. Ben Ali said that the attacks into Iraq violated the spirit of the resolutions.

"These resolutions stipulate the liberation of Kuwait, and not the crushing of Iraq, signifying that an eventual battlefield should not pass the Kuwaiti borders," Mr. Ben Ali said.

The Tunisian president urged Arab countries "to appeal to the Security Council to put in place an immediate cease-fire and apply international law without discrimination."

He also demanded an international peace conference on the Middle East.

The speech underscored a joint initiative by Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Libya and Mauritania for the Security Council to take steps to end the Gulf war.

Tunisia officially condemns the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, but the country has been the site of huge pro-Iraq street demonstrations since last week.

In Morocco, trade unions said Saturday that authorities forbade them to hold planned street demonstrations in support of Iraq.

The demonstrations, to be held in Rabat, Casablanca and other cities, were called by leading trade unions and opposition political parties.

Government officials did not immediately confirm the banning, but authorities have consistently forbid them since Iraq invaded Kuwait Aug. 2, fearing violence might break out.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat visited Rabat Saturday and held talks with King Hassan II, who is alone among North African leaders in committing troops to the multinational alliance. Details of their conversation were not immediately disclosed.

Deliberations inconclusive, page 2

Soviets still helping Iraq — on their own

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. officials say some Soviet experts continue to help Iraq wage war, but add that they are operating without Moscow's approval.

The experts are believed to be mainly helping Iraq with its Soviet-supplied MiG-29 jet fighters, which the Iraqis have had trouble maintaining, said one source.

"But it's highly unlikely this is under command from Moscow," said another source. Both asked that their names not be used.

A third official said the Soviets might be getting support from hardliners in the military or KGB who oppose the Kremlin's decision to turn against its former ally and support the U.N. embargo against Iraq.

Soviet officials have said several hundred Soviet citizens have approached the Iraqi embassy in Moscow offering to fight for Iraq.

The question of Soviet support for allied Gulf policy is likely to come up in talks Monday between the new Soviet foreign minister, Alexander Bessmertnykh, and U.S. President George Bush.

The Bush administration has dismissed persistent reports of continued Soviet aid to Iraq, repeatedly emphasising that Moscow supported the anti-Iraq coalition at the United Nations and was adhering to the embargo.

On Jan. 4, a U.S. vessel stopped a Soviet ship heading for the port of Agaba — a frequent overland entryway into Iraq — and found tank parts on board. The State Department said the shipment

appeared to be unauthorised.

Before Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2, the Soviets had as many as 5,000 technicians and advisers working with the Iraqi military and at government-owned oil and petrochemical facilities. Iraq was one of the most lucrative export markets for Soviet armaments, with outstanding contracts topping \$20 billion.

The Soviets were all ordered home in recent months and a top Kremlin official was sent to Baghdad to wind down Soviet contracts with the Iraqi government.

A Soviet diplomat said only about 40 Soviet officials remain in Iraq, most of them diplomats, trade representatives and journalists. The diplomat denied any of them were helping the military.

The Iraqis used to treat the Soviet technicians "royally," said Mark Kramer, a Harvard University expert on the Soviet military. He said it is not surprising that some decided to stay on.

"But they couldn't have a great military value," he said.

At most, he said they could be helping the Iraqis with the MiG-29s, which have presented Soviet clients in the Mideast with problems, being far more sophisticated than the other Soviet jets in their arsenals.

One official said the Soviets had launched two satellites last year to collect information about the Gulf. But he dismissed reports that the Soviets were supplying the Iraqis with satellite photos of targets in Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Bombing damages witnessed at Najaf

NICOSIA (R) — Cable News Network (CNN) correspondent in Iraq Peter Arnett said Saturday he had seen two areas of the Shi'ite Muslim holy city of Najaf which suffered war damage and civilian casualties.

Residents told him at least 20 people were killed in bombing raids by the U.S. or its allies, he said.

Arnett, one of two Westerners still reporting from Iraq, said he saw huge bomb craters in a street in the Al Amiri district about two kilometres from the tomb of Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammad who is specially revered by the Shi'ites.

Mohammad Ali, a Baghdad engineer who had sought safety with relatives in the Holy City 160 kilometres south of the capital, told Arnett he saw planes attacking Najaf last Sunday. He said there was no anti-aircraft fire.

Thirteen members of one family were killed in a house which was totally destroyed in Al Amiri, Arnett was told. Damage extended for five blocks.

In another district of the city,

(Continued on page 5)

France bans 3 Arabic papers

AMMAN (J.T.) — The French authorities have banned three Arabic-language publications from printing in Paris, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported yesterday. The agency quoted the French interior minister as banning the three publications, Al Arab newspaper and Al Dostour and Kul Al Arab magazines, because they defended interests that contradicted with those of France.

INA also reported from Paris that the French authorities banned and confiscated a videotape circulating among Arab immigrants in France because it contained songs and interviews that praised Iraq and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Bessmertnykh says Gulf, Baltics cast doubt on superpower ties

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Differing views on the Gulf war and developments in the Soviet Baltic republics could cast a shadow over superpower relations, Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh said Saturday.

Mr. Bessmertnykh, a former ambassador to the United States, was speaking to Soviet reporters before his departure for Washington for talks expected to decide whether a superpower summit goes ahead as scheduled next month.

Uncertainty on both issues has put in doubt the Feb. 11-13 meeting at which it had been intended to conclude a deal on reducing strategic nuclear weapons.

The foreign minister, who is due to meet President George Bush and Secretary of State James Baker in Washington, said U.S.-Soviet relations had a "very solid base."

But the official TASS news agency said he admitted that differing views on "hot spots... wrong interpretation of

development in the Soviet Union

and emotional perceptions of things in some other places cast a certain shadow."

TASS quoted him as saying: "It would be extremely dangerous to reverse (relations) or make serious changes and this would have serious consequences both for the Soviet Union and United States and for the entire international situation."

"I believe the U.S. leadership understands this and will show the restraint and wisdom it has so far demonstrated."

Mr. Bessmertnykh said bilateral ties were clouded by a "wrong interpretation of developments in the Soviet Union."

Mr. Bessmertnykh said "difficulties have emerged," especially within the U.S. Congress, which has been trying to link U.S. aid for the Soviet economy with "events in the Baltics." TASS reported.

The U.S. Congress has passed resolutions criticizing the Soviet military crackdown in the Baltics.

The house also asked U.S. President

George Bush to consider economic sanctions if the harsh Soviet policy continues.

Mr. Bush is to decide in coming days whether to proceed with a U.S.-Soviet summit as scheduled Feb. 11-13, following events in the Baltic as well as in the Gulf.

The Gulf war will be one of the key issues discussed Saturday when the Soviet foreign minister meets with Mr. Baker.

Mr. Bessmertnykh, who replaced Foreign Minister Edward Shevardnadze this month, told TASS on his departure that he did not envision changes in Soviet foreign policy.

"We do not intend to correct major directions of our foreign policy, including relations with the United States," TASS quoted him as saying.

Mr. Bessmertnykh also said he hoped to "clarify" Kremlin policy toward the Baltics, saying it would be "extremely dangerous" to reverse relations with the United States, TASS reported.

Security Council deliberations inconclusive on Gulf conflict

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The U.N. Security Council Friday failed to decide on a public debate on the Gulf war. The United States and Soviet Union opposed a public session unless Iraq is willing to withdraw troops from Kuwait.

Council President Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya of Zaire held inconclusive informal talks with council members and other states Friday and announced there would be further consultations Monday afternoon.

After that, he said, he would announce whether there would be a formal meeting to discuss the Gulf war.

"If we are only going to have a debate saying that we all don't like the war, then there is no point in holding a meeting," said Soviet Ambassador Yuliy Vorontsov on entering consultations.

"We don't think it would be useful to have an official council session unless Iraq is willing to withdraw from Kuwait and end its occupation," he said.

U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering said the United States supports council action that would end Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.

On Thursday night, the council rebuffed an Arab attempt to publicly discuss a ceasefire to enable Iraq to declare its intention to withdraw from Kuwait.

On Nov. 29 the council itself authorised the United States and its allies to use military force to expel Iraq from Kuwait. In 12 resolutions since Iraq invaded Kuwait Aug. 2, the council has demanded Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from the emirate.

To express dismay over the war at this time, Western diplomats

said, would undercut the authority of the council and its unity in demanding an Iraqi pullout.

Iraq has rejected all calls to withdraw and ignored peace initiatives which demand a decision to withdraw as a precondition for any negotiations.

On Thursday, nations with large Islamic populations — Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen — urged a public council meeting. But they failed to secure the nine votes required to place an item on the agenda.

Iran and India separately also have proposed pauses in the hostilities, but both also insist that Iraq agree to withdraw before any conciliation can take place.

The council includes the five permanent members with veto power: The United States, Britain, China, France and the

Soviet Union, and 10 other members with rotating, two-year terms: Austria, Belgium, Cuba, Ecuador, India, Ivory Coast, Romania, Yemen, Zaire and Zimbabwe.

Ambassador Vorontsov of the Soviet Union, in comments to reporters, questioned why it was necessary to have a meeting as requested by Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

Is it "to repeat the same position that they don't like military activities?" he asked.

"We all don't like military activities but at the same time they are not prepared to appeal to Baghdad to withdraw their forces from Kuwait," he said, "First appeal there and then appeal to the Security Council."

Austria is asking the council to hold a formal meeting on the war, but behind closed doors — a

procedure that has not been used since 1975, an Austrian diplomat said.

Mr. Vorontsov told reporters that if the council had "enough material for a good action, that's one thing."

But "it is only to have a debate that we all don't like the war, then I don't think we should have a Security Council meeting," he said.

Asked about the bombs dropping on civilians in Iraq, the ambassador said it was "very unfortunate" but that this question should be put to Iraq.

"If (Iraq) wants it this way, what can we do?" he said. Most of the five North African countries, members of the Arab Maghreb Union, want the council to approve a pause in the war so diplomatic efforts can resume.

which has sent troops to Saudi Arabia to join the allied forces, is not known.

The five are not council members but under the U.N. charter any member of the world body can ask for a meeting. Their appeal is supported by Yemen and Cuba, who are members.

Cuban Ambassador Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada told reporters the council was "not created simply to facilitate war but to prevent it and to make peace."

He said the council was irresponsible in adopting its Nov. 29 resolution authorising the use of force against Iraq if it did not withdraw from Kuwait by Jan. 15.

"At that time probably some people were expecting a beautiful little war. But now it is certainly not so beautiful, and not as rapid as they envisaged," he said.

Gulf-linked blasts and protests continue

The Associated Press

A BOMB BLAST in central Paris early Saturday brought violence related to the Gulf war to France for the first time, while other governments arrested and expelled Arabs as the conflict ground into its 10th day.

U.S. President George Bush and the foreign ministers of Italy and Australia denounced Iraq for allegedly causing a massive oil spill that threatens to cause major damage to the Gulf's delicate marine environment.

In France, a bomb exploded at the headquarters of the liberal newspaper Liberation, causing considerable damage but no injuries. A leaflet left at the scene led officials to link the incident to the war.

In Uganda, a hand grenade exploded on a tennis court in the capital Kampala minutes after the U.S. ambassador finished playing there. No one was injured.

Australia Saturday ordered Iraq's charge d'affaires, the highest-ranking Iraqi diplomat in Canberra, to leave within 72 hours. On Tuesday, the diplomat had said activists might strike Australia if it increased its military involvement with the U.S.-led effort against Iraq.

In Sydney, a Lebanese was charged with threatening to endanger the safety of an aircraft in an alleged plot to hijack a plane to Kuwait foiled by police.

In Malaysia, security was tightened around foreign airplanes one day after a bomb was found near the offices of two U.S. airlines. The bomb was detonated by police and there were no injuries.

Pan Am has been refusing service to all Iraqis since the war broke out Jan. 17, the New York Times reported.

In South Korea, a dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed Saturday on the 43,000 U.S. troops and their families.

Malaysian police detained

three Arabs who allegedly tried to ship into Malaysia from Thailand by boat. Officials could not immediately establish any links to extremists plans.

In the Philippines, two Iraqi borthers linked to a bungled bombing attempt at a U.S. cultural centre in Manila last week were deported. The bombing attempt killed one Iraqi and injured another.

In Lebanon, a previously unknown group threatened Saturday to attack foreign interests to avenge attacks on Iraq. Several bombs already have exploded in the country, killing one, near locations with links to countries in the multinational forces.

As U.S. and British officials warned the war would be long and bloody, support for the anti-Iraq coalition weakened in some countries.

Algerian President Chadli Bendjedid gave up trying to negotiate an end to the conflict and threw his support behind Iraq.

Malaysia expressed worry Saturday that the war was expanding beyond the scope envisioned by U.N. members who voted to allow allies to use force to expel Iraq from Kuwait.

An explosion damaged a car outside the U.S. consulate and another blast blew off the door of a Turkish-American organisation in the southern Turkey city of Adana, Saturday, authorities said. No injuries were reported.

The attacks on U.S. targets were the first reported in Adana, the main city near the strategic Incirlik base being used by U.S. warplanes bombing Iraq.

The explosions came after three other attacks against organisations with U.S. links in Istanbul in the past week.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Saturday's explosions. The bombings in Istanbul had been claimed by a Turkish underground leftist group, Dev Sol (Revolutionary Left).

Bonn may give Patriot missiles to Israelis

BONN (R) — Germany has hinted that it might supply Patriot missiles to Israel to boost the Jewish state's defences against Iraqi attacks.

Israeli officials told German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher Friday that they needed more Patriots to ensure their security against Scud missile attacks from Iraq.

They stopped short of asking Bonn to part with some of its Patriots, but Mr. Genscher told journalists during his visit to Israel: "If any such wishes were expressed, they would be considered seriously."

The United States has supplied Israel with anti-missile Patriot systems, but the commander-in-chief of the German armed forces, Admiral Dieter Wellerhoff, said the Patriots supplied to Germany were primarily anti-aircraft weapons.

"They were acquired under the auspices of East-West confrontation and are not primarily equipped against missiles," he said on German television. Germany began taking delivery of a planned total of 144 Patriot missiles in 1989.

Mr. Genscher's hint that Germany would supply the missiles was the latest indication of his country's desire to improve its tarnished image in Israel. The U.S. and allied countries are angry at Bonn's determination to stay out of the Gulf war.

Germany has not sent troops to the Gulf because of constitutional constraints, but it did dispatch 18 Alpha jet fighters to NATO-member Turkey and minesweep-

ers to the Eastern Mediterranean as back-up for the allied effort.

Accusations that German firms supplied poison gas to Iraq and boosted the range of its missiles has caused anger which Bonn's gift this week of 250 million marks (\$165 million) in aid for Israel has done little to allay.

Mr. Genscher was jeered in Israel by protesters in gas masks and striped concentration camp suits.

"Germany's image has been dragged into the dirt by those who delivered Saddam Hussein's armaments and by the government that allowed it to happen," German television commentator Fritz Pleitgen said Friday night.

The government urged anti-war protesters planning a huge demonstration in Bonn Saturday night to let anti-American emotions blind them to Iraq's role in starting the crisis.

It issued an unusual statement stressing Bonn's loyalty to NATO and Israel, and reminding Germans of their moral responsibility to support Israel. The peace cooperative network expects 150,000 people to converge on Bonn for Saturday's rally.

In his television interview, Mr. Wellerhoff delivered an implicit rebuke to the opposition social democrats, who support the anti-war movement.

"We sometimes look rather enviously at our alliance partners right now and see large majorities in parliament supporting the United Nations action," he said.

"German soldiers expect the politicians to stick together more."

Palestinians under Israeli rule hit hard by blanket curfew

By Eileen Alt Powell

The Associated Press

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

— Farmers can't harvest their crops, construction workers can't get to their jobs, flour and milk are in short supply and money is running out.

These are problems facing Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip as the army's blanket curfew stretched Friday to nine days and showed no sign of being lifted.

The curfew has confined the 1.7 million Palestinians to their homes, except for occasional two- or three-hour breaks to allow families to shop. Some shops have no goods on their shelves.

Israeli Arab legislator Abdul Wahab Darawsh appealed Friday to Defence Minister Moshe Arens to end the restrictions, saying "the situation is deteriorating and the territories are boiling as a result of this disgusting procedure."

Palestinian Professor Ghasan Khatib warned that if the curfew went on much longer "the shops are going to be empty and the pockets are going to be empty."

The army insists the curfew imposed at the start of the allied bombing of Iraq is necessary to prevent Palestinian activists from causing disruptions that could aid Iraq's war effort.

"Our concern is that support-

ters of Iraq — which is almost the totality of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories — don't undermine our security," said an army spokesman, who cannot be named under military rules.

Although not directly involved in the war, Israel has had to step up its air defences to counter Iraqi missile attacks and does not want its forces distracted by problems in the occupied territories.

The curfew, he added, will continue "as long as we think necessary."

Western aid organisations think the restrictions have lasted long enough.

The confinement "endangers the life and livelihood" of the Palestinians, the aid groups said in a joint statement read to reporters by Brother Donald Mansir of the Vatican's pontifical mission for Palestine.

"A significant portion of those Palestinians dependent upon daily wages have been unable to reach their jobs," the statement said. "Should the curfew continue, a large segment of the population will be unable to purchase the essentials necessary for subsistence."

The aid groups also said there was a critical shortage of animal feed and that all the Palestinians' livestock is at risk.

The U.N. Relief and Works Agency, which assists Palesti-

nian refugees, has already begun emergency distribution of flour, rice, sugar and canned goods in four West Bank refugee camps and has plans for more, said UNRWA spokeswoman Claire Grimes.

"The biggest problem out there is the uncertainty," Ms. Grimes said. "We are getting an awful lot of worried phone calls. There food stocks are dwindling and they are worried about getting back to work."

Palestinians confined to their homes find themselves spending hours watching war movies on Jordan Television or videos passed from neighbour to neighbour, they say. They also monitor radios to find out how the Gulf war is going.

"We cannot feed our families by listening to the news," complained Abdul Fattah Abu Shokor, an economist from the West Bank town of Nablus.

He said farmers have been forbidden to work their fields and that the 110,000 Palestinians who have jobs in Israel may lose them for failing to show up for days.

Mohammad Zakut, secretary of the fishermen's society in the Gaza Strip, said boats have been banned from going out so that fish, normally in copious supply, have disappeared from Gaza's markets.

"There are no vegetables, no meat," Zakut complained. "We eat only bread, olives, lentils and beans."

Manila expels 2 more Iraqis

MANILA (R) — The Philippines Saturday expelled two Iraqi nationals linked to an attempted bombing of a U.S. Library. Intelligence agencies said they were part of a Baghdad-sponsored network in Asia.

Husham and Hisham Abdul Sattar, both students and sons of Iraq's ambassador to Somalia, were put on a plane to Kuala Lumpur, where they were expected to take a connecting flight to Tehran.

From there they would travel overland to Iraq, a spokeswoman for the Commission on Immigration and Deportation said.

Earlier this week, Manila deported the Iraqi embassy's first secretary, Muwafak Al Ani after linking him to the attempted bombing of the Thomas Jefferson Library in Manila's Makati business district on Jan. 19.

One Iraqi was killed and another was wounded when the bomb they were attempting to plant exploded prematurely.

Mr. Ani and the Abdul Sattar brothers denied any involvement in the bombing, as well as allegations that they were part of an international network.

But they vowed to join the Iraqi army to fight the allied forces attacking their country.

"Down, down Bush. Long live Saddam," the brothers chanted as they were led onto the plane.

Oil slick threatens Gulf desalination plants, marine life

DHAHRAN (R) — A massive oil slick is spreading through the Gulf threatening marine life and moving towards desalination plants that provide coastal states with up to half their fresh water needs.

As the thick black oil washed up on the Saudi Arabian coastline, the United States and Iraq traded charges over who was to blame.

Washington accused Iraq Friday of pouring millions of gallons of crude oil into the narrow waterway to try to head off an amphibious landing by the U.S. allied forces fighting to end its occupation of Kuwait.

It described the spillage as an act of "environmental terrorism," of no military consequence.

Iraq blamed U.S. bombing of two Iraqi tankers in the Gulf last Tuesday.

Pollution monitors along the coasts of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain

and Qatar went on alert, ready to float booms around their desalination plants to stop crude from being sucked in.

"We will have to respond as the oil begins to move down the coast. Desalination plants are well protected but it will cause a ghastly environmental problem," a Gulf environmental official said. "It's a massive spill — it will have a disastrous effect on marine life over an area of hundreds of square miles."

U.S. and Saudi officials Friday reported that a slick about 15 kilometres was gushing from an underwater pipeline at Kuwait's main oil export terminal.

Tankers which were filled with Iraqi crude last October had also emptied their oil into the water at Kuwait's offshore Sea Island terminal near Mina Al Ahmadi, U.S. officials said.

"Iraq has been spilling a huge amount of oil into the Gulf from a crude oil tanker loading terminal just off the coast of Kuwait," Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams said in Washington.

"It appears that the Iraqis are using the Sea Island terminal to encourage the oil to spread out into the Gulf — this is clearly an act of environmental terrorism," he added.

Film taken by British television network ITN showed cormorants struggling through black thick waves lapping against the shore at the Saudi border town of Khafji.

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said Iraq apparently dumped the oil to try and head off an amphibious landing by U.S. marines. But Pentagon officials later said the slick would have no effect on allied military operations.

Western military sources reported before the war that Iraq planned to dump crude from several tankers and set it alight to ward off a sea attack. U.S. and Saudi officials said it would be hard to make the crude burn.

"It's not a war stopper at this point," Major General Robert Johnston, chief of staff of the U.S. central command, told reporters in Riyadh.

"It looks last gasp... it doesn't hold up to any kind of military doctrine, its kind of sick," President George Bush said.

White House officials said the spill would be much larger than the Exxon Valdez spill which dumped 11 million gallons (42 million litres) of crude into Alaska's Prince William Sound killing hundreds of birds and other wildlife.

The Gulf, the Western world's

main oil lifeline, is particularly susceptible to oil pollution because it is shallow, narrow and virtually landlocked.

Normally hot weather helps evaporate oil spills but environmental officials said cool winter weather would slow down the process.

The Gulf is home to herds of dugongs (seacows) — an endangered species — as well as dolphins, fish and many kinds of marine birds.

Iraq complained to the United Nations in a letter circulated Friday that U.S. planes bombed two Iraqi tankers in the Gulf last Tuesday, creating a "vast oil slick" likely to cause serious environmental harm.

"This is not the first time the United States has damaged the environment and exposed men and fauna to serious danger, by

undertaking nuclear tests and dumping nuclear wastes and other toxic chemicals," it said.

The letter, containing the text of a statement issued on Tuesday by an Iraqi military spokesman, was circulated the day the United States accused Iraq of deliberately pumping millions of gallons of crude oil into the Gulf, threatening a major environmental disaster.

The Iraqi statement appealed to world public opinion and organisations, particularly environmentalists, to "denounce this criminal act and to do everything within their power to put an end to such acts."

"For its part Iraq, which respects the right to life of all human beings and which God has endowed with natural wealth, is prepared to cooperate with any party with a view to putting an end to these crimes," it concluded.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

PRAYER TIMES

05:08 Fajr
06:28 (Sunrise) Duha
11:48 Dhuhur
16:43 'Asr
17:08 Maghrib
18:28 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifich Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasana Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625541.
Anglican Church Tel. 625383. Tel. 628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 773261.

Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The effect of the depression which affected the Kingdom in the past few days will decrease gradually. Thus it will be partly cloudy and a rise in temperatures is expected.

Min./max. temp.
Amman 1 / 8
Aqaba 10 / 17
Deserts -1 / 7
Jordan Valley 7 / 15

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Bassam Karadseh 796200
Dr. Rizq Abu Zein (—)
Dr. Munther al Quraini 776258
Dr. Zein Zaghloul 638591
First pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 783536
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Naioukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yaoub pharmacy 644945

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 680100
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police

843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605900
Water and Sewerage 661176

Company

636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 813813/32
Khaleel Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn 642412/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musair Hospital 667227/9
Al-Musair Hospital 661273/7
The Islamic, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 771013/3

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 50 / 480
Banana 500 / 450
Banana (Mukammur) 450 / 400
Beans 500 / 400

MARKET PRICES

Cabbage 100 / 80
Carrot 250 / 200
Cauliflower 300 / 250
Corn 200 / 150
Cucumbers (large) 100 / 50
Cucumbers (small) 250 / 200
Dates 500 / 400
Eggplant 180 / 120
Garlic 1700 / 1500
Lemon 250 / 200
Mallow 180 / 120
Marrow (large) 120 / 80
Marrow (small) 250 / 200
Onion (dry) 270 / 220
Onion (green) 150 / 100
Okra 600 / 500
Orange 440 / 250
Pepper (hot) 350 / 300
Pepper (sweet) 120 / 80
Potato 250 / 200
Radish 100 / 50
Sage 350 / 250
Spanish 120 / 80
Tomatoes 120 / 80

مكتبة النهر

Eyewitness details misery Moves underway to lift closure of Iraqi border

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Intense diplomatic efforts were under way Saturday to obtain an accurate picture of the situation at the Iraqi side of the border post with Jordan and to have the Iraqis lift the four-day closure of the crossing, official sources said.

A senior Iraqi diplomat in Jordan crossed the Al Ruweished border post Saturday accompanied by Jordanian officials, witnesses reported from the frontier.

The witnesses also said several trucks carrying relief supplies also went into Iraq from Al Ruweished, 350 kilometres northeast of Amman.

U.N. sources said they were informed that Jordan was sending relief supplies to evacuees stranded at the Iraqi border awaiting the reopening of the border.

"The shipments are mostly food and blankets and at least one tanker of fuel," one of the sources said (an acute shortage of fuel has been reported in Iraq, raising concern that lack of fuel might have hampered the evacuation of many who wanted to leave).

An official at the Iraqi embassy here would only say that "contacts are continuing and the border could be reopened soon, perhaps as early as tomorrow (Sunday)" and a "senior diplomat from the embassy" had left for Iraq.

The official would not provide any clue whatsoever to what prompted the border closure in the first place.

Senior Jordanian officials said the Kingdom had requested Iraq to lift its closure of the border. While they expressed optimism that the Iraqi post would be reopened soon, they did not have any definite indication that the move could come Sunday. Nor did they have any clear indication of the motives for the closure.

"I hope they will reopen it since it has become a major humanitarian issue, with thousands of people suffering at Trebeil," a senior official said.

An Indian diplomat who visited Trebeil Saturday reported that "most people are in very bad shape". The diplomat, who preferred anonymity, said he estimated the total number of people stranded at the border — around 3,000 — of them Jordanians, Egyptians and Sudanese and a few other nationals.

"The Iraqi officials at the border are asking for a special permission from the Iraqi interior ministry for everyone who wants to leave," he said. "This seems to apply to everyone, including Jordanians and other Arabs as well as Asians, who already have exit permits," he reported.

"The people are suffering really badly in the weather," he said. "Those who have vehicles are

relatively well off since they can remain within the vehicles, but the rest — about 1,000 — do not have any shelter whatsoever."

"Some of them told me they crawl under trucks and other vehicles when it starts raining," he said.

According to the diplomat, food is distributed among the people by the Jordanian Red Crescent and the International Red Cross societies.

Trebeil is about 75 kilometres further from Al Ruweished across the no-man's-land between the two countries.

The Indian diplomat said there were 51 of his countrymen at the border. Two other Indian groups — 116 nurses and 14 dependents and 110 construction workers — are presumed to have returned to Baghdad or Basra when told last week that the border was closed.

A report that the Indian nurses — most of them women — were "missing somewhere" in Iraq following the outbreak of the Gulf war on Jan. 17 had created an uproar in India, where the government came under harsh criticism for what the opposition described as not doing enough to get them out of the war theatre in time.

Earlier reports have indicated that the Iraqis, who clamped down at Trebeil at midnight Tuesday, were warning travellers into Iraq that while they would be permitted to enter the country they would not be permitted to leave. It was not known whether the ban on departure applied to diplomats.

Evacuation from Jordan

In Amman, International Organisation for Migration (IOM) officials said a process of ferrying evacuees from Iraq and Kuwait to Egypt for onward flights home was streamlined Saturday.

"Everyone is cooperating very well, and we do not envisage any major problems," said Peter S. Natze, head of the IOM mission in Amman.

He said a group of 580 Vietnamese were headed for Aqaba to board a ferry for Nuweibeh, Egypt, later Saturday. The Vietnamese will be flown home aboard Nippon Airways planes from Cairo.

Mr. Schatzler also said IOM was arranging charter flights from Aqaba for over 1,500 Sudanese evacuees starting Tuesday. "We are also hoping to arrange two charter flights for Asians," he said.

Around 600 Asians — Indians, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans and Pakistanis are housed in various transit camps in Jordan after their scheduled departures were delayed because of the closure of Saudi airspace in the wake of the Gulf war.

More rain, snow expected today

AMMAN (J.T.) — The effects of the low pressure and the severely cold polar air mass are not yet over; and more snow, rain and cold weather is expected in the Kingdom Sunday, according to the Meteorological Department.

A department spokesman told the Jordan Times that the southern regions of the country, which received snowfall in the past two days, were expected to receive more, but less intense snowfall Saturday evening and Sunday morning but other areas would receive scattered rain.

The snow was between 30 to 70 centimetres deep in the highlands of Shobak and Tafleh areas blocking transport, the spokesman noted.

He said that the polar air mass would continue to affect the country Sunday with maximum temperatures rising to eight Celsius, up from five Saturday, while the temperatures at night were expected to drop to zero. He said that these temperatures were below normal average for this time of the year.

By Sunday, the spokesman added, the severity of the low atmospheric pressure would start to diminish as the cold front moves eastwards towards Iraq. Department director, Ali Abanda, told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that more snowfall was expected in the week, probably Friday, but as from Tuesday the Kingdom was expected to receive more rain in most regions.

Ministry of Agriculture's Secretary-General Sami Sunnaa Friday issued an appeal to farmers to plant olive and other fruit trees and said that this was the most suitable time for planting.

The Public Security Department (PSD) Saturday announced that roads within the Tafleh, Shobak and Maan regions in the south, Irbid in the north and Ruweished and Badia regions in the east were either totally or partially blocked by snow. The PSD warned of poor visibility along the roads in general and those lying in areas with snowfall in particular.

A report on the amounts of rain that has fallen in the Kingdom up to Saturday morning said some areas of Tafleh governorate received the highest level — a total of 72 millimetres, while Aqaba in the south received only one millimetre.

Reports from the snow affected areas said that civil defence bulldozers were at work Saturday, reopening the blocked road. No damages to property were reported so far.

In the meantime, Water and Irrigation Minister Saad Sour Saturday visited Irbid governorate and discussed with Governor Fayed Abbadi the water situation in Irbid areas and preparations to deal with emergency situations resulting from rain and snowfall.

Gulf war paralyses shipping to Aqaba

By Serene Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's shipping sector, that received a blow during the five and a half months of embargo against Iraq, is still suffering especially after the outbreak of the war in the Gulf.

According to shipping sources, the port of Aqaba has been totally deserted since the start of the war on Jan. 17. "I can't really tell whether the ships are being intercepted at the Tiran Straits or not, because the port of Aqaba is totally deserted," Rudayn Kawaar, of the Amin Kawaar Shipping Company told the Jordan Times.

He also added that the only ship that had come to the port of Aqaba since the outbreak of the war, was an empty vessel that arrived Friday to load clinker (the raw material for cement). "The ship was not searched because it was already empty," Kawaar said.

Throughout the crisis, the shipping sector of Jordan has been hard hit by the United Nations embargo against Iraq. According to shipping officials this embargo was also enforced against Jordan, even after the Americans had conceded that Jordan was abiding with the

embargo on Iraq. Despite actions and pleas made by the Shipping Agents Association in Jordan to the international organisations and to media representatives, the "harrassment" of Jordan-bound vessels continued.

"Now (after the outbreak of the war) we are faced with a problem of getting ships to come to Aqaba," Kawaar added explaining that ship owners are avoiding the port of Aqaba because of the fear of war, and of the high cost of insurance on ships. "The insurance on the ship has gone up from 0.25 per cent to a minimum of 2.5 per cent, or according to the price set by Lloyd's Insurance Company (largest insurance broker on ships and planes)," Kawaar said.

For example, if the value of the ship is \$10 million, then the customer must pay in insurance close to \$250,000 for a week's stay in the port of Aqaba, Kawaar said.

"The American-led forces at the Tiran Straits are still applying the embargo against Iraq," Kawaar said, adding that two ships are expected to come to Aqaba on the 28th of January. "The search will go on but we still don't know whether our ships will be able to pass through to Aqaba," Kawaar said.

Jaljouli, Atiqa review situation of Gulf refugees in Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — Health Minister Adnan Jaljouli and U.N. representative in Jordan, Ali Atiqa, Saturday reviewed the Gulf war refugee situation and services offered to the evacuees arriving in the Kingdom from Iraq.

Present at the meeting was a regional representative of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Jibril Ashour, who will accompany Dr. Jaljouli on a tour of evacuee camps Sunday to study the conditions there.

The Jordanian authorities, in conjunction with international organisations and the Jordan National Red Crescent Society and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), have set up several camps to house the evacuees at Azraq and Ruweished.

A spokesman for one of these organisations, the United Nations Disaster and Relief Organisation (UNDRO), said in a statement in Geneva Saturday that 7,000 evacuees are now being housed in the camps in Jordan and intensive efforts are being made to raise contributions of food supplies and medicine from various nations to help them.

He said that arrangements are also being made to repatriate the foreign nationals now residing in evacuee camps in the kingdom. According to the UNDRO official, the Japanese government has placed four aircraft at the United Nations disposal to repatriate 2,000 Vietnamese and Filipinos among those evacuees in Jordan.

According to the French news agency, AFP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has been intensifying its services to the evacuees in Jordan. Jordan has agreed to open its borders for the evacuees coming from Kuwait and Iraq following a

pledge by U.N. organisations to provide the country with compensation for the expenses incurred in the process of caring for the evacuees over the past months.

The question of humanitarian assistance for the evacuees was among the topics discussed Saturday by the general assembly of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) which met under the chairmanship of Dr. Ahmad Abu Qoura.

The assembly heard a report by JNRCS Deputy-President Mohammad Al-Hadid on the situation in the evacuee camps and the emergency teams set up to provide assistance to camp residents.

A statement following the meeting said that the assembly voiced its appreciation of the close cooperation displayed by the ICRC and other humanitarian organisations in the course of providing assistance to the evacuees and Iraqi people in conjunction with the Iraqi Red Crescent Society.

The assembly, in particular, thanked the Red Cross societies in Holland, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Iceland, Spain, Finland, Denmark, Germany, Italy, France, Greece, Switzerland, Britain, Austria and Thailand for their cooperation and assistance to the evacuees through the JNRCS.

According to news reports Saturday, at least 5,000 Gulf war refugees are now gathered at the Iraqi side of the border with Jordan, awaiting its reopening to come here. They had been waiting at the border for the past four days, according to these reports.

Earlier reports said that 12,000 people had fled Iraq and Kuwait since the bombing raids started on Jan. 17.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Senate panel discusses Gulf war

AMMAN (Petra) — The foreign affairs committee of the Upper House of Parliament held a meeting Saturday under the chairmanship of House Speaker Ahmad Al-Lawzi. The committee's rapporteur, Hamad Al-Farhan, said the committee discussed the latest developments in the Gulf war and voiced condemnation of the brutality of the attack by the U.S. and the allied forces on Iraq. The committee, Farhan said, stressed the need for Arabs and Muslims to stop this aggression. According to Farhan, the committee decided to hold a meeting soon to be attended by Foreign Minister Taher Al-Masri to discuss the possible ways Jordan can contribute to ending hostilities in the Gulf.

Gas masks need checking

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Defence Department (CDD) Saturday asked merchants selling gas masks to offer the masks for examination at the CDD which will also check their compliance with the specifications set by the department. The CDD also asked all citizens not to buy gas masks unless they were examined and licensed by the department.

Zarqa officials review economic situation

ZARQA (Petra) — A symposium was held Saturday at Zarqa Chamber of Commerce to discuss the economic situation in the governorate in the light of the present circumstances prevailing in the region. Taking part in the symposium were Zarqa Governor Mohammad Hussein Al-Shobaki, Zarqa Chamber of Commerce President Ibrahim Taqaidine as well as directors of banks and factories in the governorate. The symposium urged factory owners not to dismiss employees no matter what the circumstances were, and to continue the production process.

Masri heads to Tehran today

Jordan, Iran to bolster ties, discuss situation in Gulf area

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan Sunday embarks on new moves to bolster its ties with Iran and boost current attempts to convene an Islamic conference to discuss the situation in the Gulf region.

Foreign Minister Taher Al-Masri who is leaving for Tehran Sunday said on the eve of the visit that it was aimed at speeding up the process of ambassadors' exchange between Jordan and Iran following this month's announcement of the restoration of ties between the two countries after a break of 10 years.

"The Jordanian foreign ministry will take all the necessary measures to speed up this process and to reopen Iranian and Jordanian embassies in Amman and Tehran," the minister said on the eve of the trip.

Masri said he was carrying a written message from His Majesty King Hussein to Iran's President Hashemi Rafsanjani, and he

would hold talks with Iranian government officials.

Masri described the visit as acquiring a special nature due to the ongoing events in the Gulf and the dangers facing the Middle East.

"The devastating Gulf war that is being waged against Iraq is putting Jordan and Iran in some sort of an identical situation; and therefore the two have to participate in numerous political and diplomatic activities," he minister said.

"Iran is a large country and a regional power that is facing a huge foreign military power which Iranians feel might threaten their country's present and future national security," Masri said.

He added that Jordan, which guards the longest confrontation lines with Israel, was facing the Israeli ambitious designs in Jordan and the neighbouring Arab countries.

This is essential if the Islamic nation is to adopt a unified stand which can help stop the devastating war, Masri added.

Jordan earlier announced its acceptance of an Iranian call for an emergency meeting by the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to discuss an end to the war.

But according to Masri in a statement to Monte Carlo radio Saturday noon, a number of countries, specially the United States, oppose any meeting at the international level to discuss an end to the war and insist on Iraq leaving Kuwait first.

However, Iran needs the backing of two thirds of OIC's 46 members so that the meeting can take place.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, a number of senior foreign ministry officials will accompany Masri on the visit.

Jordan walks economic tightrope

AMMAN (R) — Jordan is relying on foreign aid and its own reserves to ride out an economic crisis caused by five months of turmoil in the Gulf. Finance Minister Basil Jaraneh said Saturday.

"The situation now is very critical," he told Reuters. "But because reserves are appropriate and further financial support from the international community is expected that will give the economy a reasonable breathing space."

He said Jordan had lost most of its exports, the key transportation and agricultural sectors were seriously hurt and real gross

domestic product — all goods and services from the private and public sector after allowing for inflation — had declined by eight per cent in the five months since Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait.

But he said the thousands of Jordanian workers forced to return home from the Gulf had given short-term help because they had pumped the money they had saved back into the economy.

A European Community grant expected soon would provide further economic support, he said.

Monetary sources said the Finance Ministry was expecting about \$207 million from the Com-

munity. Jordan had budgeted for \$150 million in foreign grants during 1991.

Jardaneh would not put a figure on Jordan's foreign reserves but some economists have estimated the current total at about \$600 million.

The minister said he did not expect a rise in inflation, which reached 9.5 per cent last year.

Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait deprived Jordan of its biggest export market after it began complying with a U.N. trade embargo against Iraq. Exports to other markets have been hurt by a Western naval blockade on the port of Aqaba to monitor Jordan-

adherence to the sanctions.

In another development, government sources said Saturday that Saudi Arabia, which last year stopped oil supplies and barred Jordanian imports in anger at Amman's sympathy with Baghdad, had stopped Jordanian trucks crossing its territory since the start of the war.

The sources said the move, made while Riyadh allowed Turkish and Syrian trucks to cross its territory, had severed access to the United Arab Emirates for Jordanian fruits and vegetables. "We are not able to ship anything by truck," one source said.

Schools reopen tomorrow

AMMAN (J.T.) — More than a million students will go back to school Monday, at the start of the second semester of the 1990-1991 scholastic year, and they will be oriented on public safety matters, according to Ministry of Education officials Saturday.

The students of the public and private schools, the officials said, would be trained on taking shelter during air raids and to carry out other essential tasks in times of emergency.

Earlier, Education Minister Abdullah Al-Akaleh chaired a meeting to discuss preparations for the second school term, which ends in June, and told directors of education that they should urge students to rise to the level of national responsibility and to be alert and cooperative and to avoid rash actions.

He urged the educational supervisors and heads of departments to orient the students on the various political developments and to advocate national unity.

According to the officials who spoke after the meeting, teachers and supervisors would be enlightening students on means of helping the armed forces and security men in safe guarding the country's stability and security.

They said that the students would be guided in their task by a working paper prepared by the Ministry of Education's guidance committee.

Students would be going back to school following a 21-day mid-year holiday that followed general mid-year examinations.

Studies have resumed at Jordanian universities Saturday. A spokesman for the University of Jordan said that the university's 14 faculties were reopened and 20,000 male and female students were resuming normal studies.

Yarmouk University said that its 13,000 students were attending classes as usual while Jordan University for Science and Technology said that its 3,000 students were resuming second semester.

47 Spaniards leave for Syria

AMMAN (J.T.) — An informed source at the Spanish embassy in Amman has said that 47 Spaniards left Amman for Damascus Friday.

Agence France Presse (AFP) quoted the embassy official as saying the Spaniards, all females married to Jordanians, were heading to Madrid aboard a Spanish aircraft.

The number of Spanish nationals staying in Amman now is 150 people, AFP said.

Saudis deny entry to Jordanians

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordanians are among nationals from five Arab countries who are banned from entering Saudi Arabia even though they might carry visas, according to Agence France Presse (AFP).

The agency, quoting official Jordanian sources, said that Jordanians, Iraqis, Yemenis, Sudanese and Palestinians were not allowed to enter Saudi territory until further notice.

It said that the Saudi authorities have circulated the ban order to all airlines to implement the new regulations and to shoulder

any responsibility for any violation of the decision.

Saudi Arabia earlier stopped all oil supplies to Jordan, terminated the services of 19 Jordanian pilots seconded by the Royal Jordanian to Saudi for five years, and reduced the staff of the Jordanian embassy in Riyadh in an apparent retaliation for Jordan's condemnation of the presence of foreign troops in the Arabian Peninsula.

Furthermore, Jordanian exports to Saudi Arabia and those heading for the Gulf region through Saudi territories were

stopped and truck drivers were reportedly harassed by Saudi border police.

Jordan's ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Nasser Al-Bataineh, who returned to Amman last September following signs of strained relations is still here.

According to the ambassador, nearly 200,000 Jordanian expatriates are working in Saudi Arabia but a number of them who had returned to Jordan told the Jordan Times they are now cut off from their relatives and families and businesses as a result of the new Saudi Arabian ban.

Peace team describes sufferings, asks Pope to help bring ceasefire

AMMAN (J.T.) — An eight-member multinational group representing the London-based Gulf Peace Team, Saturday called on the representative of the Apostolic delegation in Amman Monsignor Raouf Najjar, and handed him a message addressed to His Holiness Pope John Paul II.

The group called on the Pope to ask for an immediate 48-hour ceasefire for humanitarian purposes in the Gulf.

The group told Dr. Najjar that the population of Iraq was constantly under threat by the air raids, and therefore a ceasefire was needed at once for humanitarian reasons.

The group asked that the Pope make contacts with presidents George Bush and Saddam Hussein through diplomatic channels in order to bring about a cessation of hostilities.

In their appeal, the group members said that 14 of their colleagues were eyewitnesses in Baghdad between Jan. 17 and 21, and saw the sufferings of civilian

population on whose behalf they now appeal for a truce.

Attached to their appeal to the Pope, the group outlined the following observations.

— In the first days of war, an aerial bombardment resulted in the destruction of the public water supply, power station, civilian airport, and telecommunications.

— The destruction of communication towers, a power plant and government buildings by guided missiles.

— The bombardment of an oil refinery with a subsequent massive fire and persistent cloud of heavy black smoke.

— Damage to civilian businesses around a targeted communications station within the city.

— Apartment buildings destroyed by bombing with windows blown out in the vicinity and sightings of other damage to civilian structures.

— Closure of businesses, public schools and the University of Baghdad.

— Critical shortages of water for drinking and sanitation. We had no water in the last two days. Bottled water was not available.

— Without running water, electricity, telephone service and petrol, together with unpredictable bombing, normal activity in the city has ceased. As a result of this, families were forced to convert homes into bomb shelters, storing water and food, taping windows, and using car batteries for power.

— The net effect of these military actions has resulted in a war against the civilian population of Baghdad.

— On our trip from Baghdad to Amman we rode with a busload of refugees. On the border of Iraq we saw several hundred refugees camping in cars and buses or sleeping on the ground in below freezing temperatures. In Jordan we visited a refugee camp where the directors informed us there were severe shortages of food, blankets, mattresses and money.

— One Saudi official said: "We're not sure of the quantity yet but information as of last night indicated it doesn't exceed one million barrels (42 million gallons)."

A spokesman for a regional pollution monitoring body also said between 500,000 to one million barrels of crude had poured into the Gulf so far.

Industry executives said twin desalination plants at Jubail, which pump 240,000 gallons of drinking water a day to Riyadh, might have to shut down to prevent crude from being sucked in and damaging delicate machinery.

"The breakeven openings to the desalination plants are well protected but the magnitude of the spill may mean they will have to shut down the plant," said one.

Water

(Continued from page 1)

the oil slick by bombing two Iraq tankers last Tuesday.

Saudi officials said the oil was still flowing and the slick was moving down the Gulf at a rate of 20 kilometres a day.

The United States has convened a team of experts to fight the sea of oil which a Kuwaiti minister said was growing at the rate of 100,000 barrels (4.2 to 8.4 million gallons) a day.

"Cleaning up oil spills is difficult enough in peacetime, imagine... in wartime," Minister of State Abdul Rahman Al-Awadi told reporters.

On the Saudi coast, officials deployed booms at intake channels of desalination plants at Jubail which supply about three-quarters of the drinking water for the capital, Riyadh. The kingdom's plants produce some 500 million gallons.

"We are monitoring the situation but the only thing we can do so far is put protective booms around sensitive areas like desalination plants, power plants and the water intake channels at oil refineries," said one official.

At other Saudi plants and those of the central Gulf states of Bahrain and Qatar, protective equipment had been made ready for use although the plants were not yet threatened, industry sources said.

The United Arab Emirates, which was the longest coastline on the southwestern side of the Gulf, said it was carrying out surveys of the waters.

Nearly 1,000 kilometres away from the source of the oil, Oman, at the head of the narrow, shallow waterway, said it was also taking precautions.

U.S. analysts said the black sea already contained six million barrels (252 million gallons) of crude which could make the spill the world's biggest.

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Confounding 'amazement'

AMAZE is a verb used to show or cause astonishment, to fill with bewilderment or wonder. In a statement he made to the press a couple of days ago, U.S. President George Bush employed the word to describe his feelings towards the Iraqi president. "Saddam continues to amaze the world," Bush said, giving examples first he (Saddam) fires Scud missiles against "innocent" Israel; then he parades allied airmen on television; and now he releases oil into the waters of the Gulf.

Just how amazed George Bush is by the progress of his war against Iraq, we do not really know. To us, however, the amazement is limited to the degree at which the U.S. president's understanding of events in the region stops.

Surley the Americans had heard that Iraq was expecting and preparing for an American-led attack soon after the Jan. 15 deadline. The U.S. must have also taken note of repeated Iraqi statements that Baghdad would retaliate against Israel if and when that attack came.

With this in mind, why Bush, and the rest of the world that he claims to represent and lead, should be amazed by the sight of Scud missiles falling on Tel Aviv and other Israeli cities is beyond our comprehension. If the president and his administration chose to believe that the Iraqis would leave their missiles to be sitting ducks for aerial bombardment, or elected not to believe that Saddam Hussein would make good on his threats and promises, then that is America's problem. No room for amazement or amusement here.

What can be less of a problem for the Bush administration, though, is the parading of their and other airmen captured by Iraq after Jan. 16 and holding them away from the theatre of operations. But this does not mean that the Americans should have been astonished or bewildered by the Iraqi action. The Iraqis are fighting for their own and country's survival. You do not expect them to be gentle and kind with those who have come to destroy them. And you do not wait for them to observe and respect international conventions if their enemies do not do the same thing. Holding the pilots in an area outside the war zone was and still is simply impossible because there has not been a single inch of Iraqi territory that is not considered a target of attack by the U.S. and its military coalition. Little apprehension, and some thinking, may be in order here. But definitely not amazement.

As to the ecological disaster that so many statesmen and scientists expected to follow from any war in the Gulf, it seems that the Americans did not want to hear about it. The U.S. had every chance (and all the means) to listen and heed repeated warnings of an impending environmental tragedy when hostilities started. The fact that Washington chose to ignore those warnings, or worse still be responsible for perpetrating the disaster, does not so much call for amazement as sorrow and repentance.

George Bush does not need the use of any more verbs to continue misleading public opinion in America and worldwide. He is better off looking for deeds that would put an end to the mad and pointless war he has started.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE Iraqi missile attacks on Israel have removed the masks from the faces of European nations which are now sending emissaries to occupied Palestine to express sympathy with the Jewish state, said Al Rai Arabi daily Saturday. These emissaries have offered to give Israel additional help... we condemned attacks coming from Iraq, but they totally ignored the Palestine question and the plight of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation and oppression, the paper noted. The Iraqi missiles seem to have offered these Europeans the chance to remove their masks and to offer in the open what they have been giving in secret to the Jewish state, bolstering its occupation of Arab lands and enhancing its capabilities to maintain oppression, the paper added. The Europeans should realise that it was Israel which brought about the Iraqi missile attacks simply because of its adamant refusal to withdraw its forces from occupied Palestinian land and its continued atrocities against the Palestinians, the paper noted. None of the voices now raised in the West has been strong enough to demand that Israel should withdraw from Palestine and open the door for a lasting settlement, but all the voices are not condemning Iraq and helping the Israeli aggressors to maintain their occupation of Palestine, the paper continued. It said that Washington ought to remember that pressuring the Europeans to send emissaries to Israel and to offer help can be of no use, and that only through a brave decision to stop the raids on Iraq and to open negotiations can the problem be solved.

Sawt Al Shaab Arabic daily said Saturday that ten days have elapsed since the start of the ongoing aggression on Iraq, but the air raids launched by the unholy alliance have failed to achieve any military result except to destroy civilian and commercial centres in Iraq, this is why President Bush and his senior military aides have been disappointed, and that is why they have been issuing contradictory statements about the situation in the Gulf, the paper said. It noted that the American commanders have openly admitted committing miscalculations and made wrong estimates concerning the Iraqi armed forces, and have admitted that they are now involved in a long war in which many setbacks were expected. Furthermore, the delay in launching the ground battle on Iraq reflects the fear among these commanders and their troops of the high casualty figure they would be admitting to the American public which is now expressing total discontent and anger over the war, the paper noted. It said that American and European observers believe that the American president's fears are now focused on the prospect of his political defeat before the American public, and for this reason U.S. media and official information services have been feeding the world with fake military victories which are also needed to raise the morale of the U.S.-led forces in the Gulf.

Gulf crisis stokes Germans' fear of war in a changing world

By Tom Heneghan
Reuter

BONN — When a popular German television announcer appeared on screen in a safari suit last week, the station's switchboard lit up with calls. "We can't stand uniforms at a time like this," dozens of anguished viewers complained.

Although Germany has no soldiers in the Gulf, the war has sparked peace protests in what used to be the most militaristic country in Europe.

Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators have clogged the streets, packed prayer services and picketed military bases around Germany in the week since the war began.

A leading television journalist confessed to viewers: "I'm afraid." Another urged troops to desert. A few days later, several soldiers said on camera they might do exactly that.

Reluctant to buck the strong anti-war trend, Chancellor Helmut Kohl stubbornly made it "business as usual" in sleepy Bonn, as if hoping he could wish

the war away.

Only when criticism of Germany's stance reached a climax — with the NATO allies casting doubt in Bonn's long-term reliability and Turkey saying the Germans were too rich to care about others — did Kohl move to limit the damage.

He sent 18 fighter jets to boost Ankara's defences, but refused to take a stand in the agonised public debate that followed over how Germany could prevent being dragged into the war if Turkey were attacked by Iraq.

Kohl's clearest statement on the war so far is that he will not send his troops to fight — and here he has Bonn's 1949 constitution, which bans deployment of German troops outside the NATO area, to back him up.

Although he has given money to the allies and pledged more, he has ducked from telling Germans they will probably have to pay more taxes, a major obsession in this country.

Political analysts ask what has happened to the dynamic nation everybody applauded when it was reunified last year.

"It seems as if the Kohl government used up all its powers of imagination in 1990, the year of Germany," Theo Sommer, one of the country's leading commentators, wrote in Die Zeit.

"Every political issue, no matter how large, becomes a small-minded tax problem. The government says nothing, does nothing and does not know what it wants to do."

Karl Kaiser, of the German Institute for Foreign Affairs, agreed his country was not adjusting to the new world around it. "It's hard for the Germans, with the history they have, to change quickly," he said.

"We in Germany still can't understand that we have new responsibilities now that the East-West conflict is over and United Germany has emerged as one of the biggest and richest democracies in the West."

Saying Bonn's allies suspected Germany of keeping out of the war for selfish reasons, Kaiser warned: "I think German foreign policy is building up a debt that will take a long time to pay off."

One diplomat from the allied country commented: "My God, even the Bangladeshis have sent troops to the Gulf. Even neutral Sweden has medics there. We don't expect Germans to go and fight but can't they do anything more to support us?"

Eager to shed its militaristic past, West Germany has focused its defence for decades on warding off a Soviet attack.

Even that was too much for many Germans — young and old — who said the horrors of the Third Reich and World War II meant Germany must have nothing to do with war ever again.

But unification and the Gulf crisis, said Munich's Sueddeutsche Zeitung in a scathing editorial, have shattered the dream many had that their country could be the "biggest Switzerland in the world."

Only half in jest, another Bonn diplomat said: "This is what you get when you tell Germans for 40 years that they are terrible militaristic people. They turn around and become terrible pacifists."

Scud missiles destroy belief in a short war

By David Lawsky
Reuter

WASHINGTON — Iraq's scud missiles have been unable to destroy much except the idea that the Gulf war might be won very quickly.

Public opinion polls show an expectation that the war will be longer than many people thought initially.

Officials, too, seem to have revised some early estimates.

U.S. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney, who said days before the war started that he would not expect it to last months, now thinks it could last that long.

"It could conceivably be weeks," he said. "It could conceivably be months," he told Cable News Network television on Monday. "I don't expect anything longer than that."

That appeared to be a lengthening of Cheney's time estimate for the war since a televi-

sion appearance on the Public Broadcasting System Jan. 11, when he told an interviewer: "My own personal view is that it is not the kind of thing that would drag on for a long period of time." Asked to define a "long period of time," Cheney replied:

"A matter of months... the notion that this would be a long drawn-out affair I don't think is a valid one."

Public opinion has also changed.

The day after allied bombing began on Jan. 16, 40 per cent of those interviewed in the CBS-New York Times poll said they thought the war would be over in a few weeks.

But, according to a poll in Tuesday's edition of the New York Times, by Sunday only half that number were optimistic of a swift end to hostilities in the

Gulf region.

Cheney said the administration will put the safety of the troops ahead of quick victory.

"I think it's more important for us to be driven by considerations of minimising our own casualties as we achieve our objectives than it is to try to meet some artificial deadline," he told NBC television on Monday.

That may translate into a longer air war and a delay of sending ground troops against a heavily entrenched Iraqi army occupying Kuwait.

Cheney said the Iraqi army has displayed "no offensive capability... but its role is of course to defend Kuwait."

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein said in a speech broadcast on Sunday that he is keeping much of his military in reserve. U.S. Defence Department

briefers have made no claims recently about how complete the damage may be to the Iraqi army that is holding Kuwait.

While it appeared in the first 24 hours of the war that air attacks might have nearly knocked out the Iraqi capacity to counter-attack, the launching of scud missiles has blunted that belief.

On Tuesday, Iraq fired six missiles at Saudi Arabia, one of them in a daylight strike at the main U.S. war base.

Patriot defensive missiles were able to bring down those that appeared likely to cause damage, but fog and low cloud hampered allied bombers' attempts to hit back.

About 1,100 missions were flown on Monday, well down on the 2,000-a-day average during the opening days of operation Desert Storm, launched on Thursday.

Bases in Australia play key role in Gulf satellite war

By Wilson Da Silva
Reuter

SYDNEY — The Australian outback may be thousands of miles away from the Gulf war, but military bases there are playing a vital role in the allies' high-tech battle against Iraq, defence experts say.

Australian-U.S. bases in the remote interior use spy satellites high above the Gulf to detect Iraq's Scud missile launches and are able within a minute to warn the allies of the attacks.

"The satellites help pinpoint where a Scud launch came from, and would be used to identify the site (in Iraq) for allied fighters and bombers to strike," said military analyst William Maley at the Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra.

The bases monitor a constant stream of data of from the estimated 15 satellites either positioned above the Gulf or making orbital passes over the area.

The most important base is Nurrungar, 500 kilometres northwest of Adelaide and operated jointly by Australia and the U.S. air force, said professor Desmond Ball, head of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University.

Nurrungar collects images from U.S. DSP (Defence Support Programme) satellites, which use an infra-red telescope to detect the exhaust plumes of Scuds during ascent, and within a minute relay the information to U.S. commanders in Saudi Arabia.

In the Iraqi missile attack on Tel Aviv on Tuesday, which killed three Israelis and wounded about 100, defence analysts say the five-minute flight from Western Iraq would have left the allies with about four minutes warning.

The DSP satellites can narrow the launch source to within five kilometres and are believed to have detected 266 launches during the eight-year war between

Iran and Iraq.

They also carry television cameras to follow the missile trajectory to confirm the satellite's infra-red alarm, and can be used to monitor large military movements.

Two DSP satellites are believed to be positioned over the Gulf, the experts say.

Pine Gap, a base 20 kilometres outside of Alice Springs and run by Australia and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, eavesdrops on military and civilian communications in Iraq via satellites.

The allies are believed to be using three satellites for this task. Other satellites in lower orbits and closer to the action are believed to be monitoring the success of allied bombings and keeping tabs on Iraqi troop movements.

"If counted together (the bases') contribution to the war would be more substantial than Australia's commitment of three

naval vessels," said Ball, considered an authority on the bases.

Australia has a guided missile frigate, a destroyer and a supply ship in the Gulf and medical teams aboard hospital ships.

Officially, the Australian government says base operations are secret and releases little information about their activity.

Defence Ministry spokesman captain David Tyler says Nurrungar "provides early warning of Ballistic missile attack and data relating to missile launches and surveillance."

Pine Gap "collects intelligence data supporting the national security of Australia and the United States," he said.

Both bases were built in the late 1960s and are believed to have cost billions of dollars. Another base, north west Cape in a remote part of Western Australia, relays communications for U.S. and Australian submarines and ships.

LETTERS

The test is yet to come

For the past few weeks, we here in Jordan, have all been on our nerves, hoping that the war we dreaded would somehow miraculously be avoided. We fervently prayed for peace and hoped that reason and wisdom would yet prevail.

Now, we are witnessing an odious U.S. led bombardment such as never before seen in the history of mankind. As we observe such events, we also have begun to evaluate on an even deeper scale, the occurrences that led up to this horrible conflict.

His Majesty King Hussein made continuous noble efforts for peace with great and patient perseverance. Our very intellectual Crown Prince Hassan also strove to effect a better understanding of the entire region and some other Arab leaders have from the beginning of the Gulf crisis called for a dialogue of peace. It is now apparent that America never wanted peace in the first place. In fact, President Bush has made every effort to crush and suffocate any peace initiative because he has been a puppet of Israeli and Zionist designs to destroy Iraq in any possible means under the guise of justice, freedom and the liberation of Kuwait.

Now, unfolding before our very astonished eyes is the most brutal attack by America and its allies ever wrought by human beings. In whatever time we have left to live, we can sit and ponder just how advanced has civilization come and we can only marvel at the animal kingdom whom we sometimes classify as "cruel" when an animal kills for food. Yet, no animal destroys a life other than its own except for the purpose of mere survival.

We can take comfort from the fact that if we are forced into this conflict and God forbid, are bombed to pieces like the Iraqis, and the winds of disaster have swept over the survivors, there will trickle in silly little international charity groups which will come to compassionately pick up what's left and dry our frozen tears which cool under the heat of the burning sun. Perhaps, if we're extremely lucky, some international song groups will get together and sing "Live Aid" songs for us so our outstretched hands extended in poverty will perhaps catch a coin or two.

Hundreds of thousands of troops are massed against one country caused by the designs of a handful of insane leaders who do not even heed the pleas of their own people to stop this monstrous war. President Bush's colleagues echo his hatred and demands as though they all share amongst themselves one tiny brain locked in Bush's head. Has no one questioned the fact that all of these leaders who are sending their robots to their deaths in the Gulf will not themselves be involved in any combat? These leaders are all like Bush, sitting back in plush offices, cruelly pushing the buttons of destruction.

The Americans are a poor and misled people who suffer from the delusion that they live in a democratic nation as they are being sent to die against their will somewhere in the shifting sands of "Desert in pornography films and books but not in politically vital and alcoholic and drug addicts who live lifestyles that would flabbergast old American bucks."

As President Bush sleeps with a clear conscience, (because he has the angels whose heavenly tears will fall unheard and unseen into the South, and Imperialism and obsolete colonialism against every Arab, Arabian, Jordanian, Palestinian, or even Kuwaiti or Saudi, all evil will not go unrewarded, The test is yet to come. But

E. Yaghi

Iraq missiles

(Continued from page 1)

dozen Scuds have been fired into Saudi Arabia, killing one person and injuring about 50 others. The Israeli army spokesman said the missiles were fired from western Iraq.

The United States, Israel's closest ally, rushed in the Patriot air-defence rockets a week ago — after the first two Iraqi Scud missile attacks.

Combined American and Israeli forces have fired the Patriots since but with mixed results. Four Israelis have died and nearly 200 have been wounded in all the attacks.

An hour later, after the all-clear was sounded, the army spokesman told Israel Radio:

"It's not a chemical warhead but a conventional one. Still we are maintaining the same fine behaviour and caution against chemical weapons."

A witness interviewed by the radio said: "We stood outside, a friend and me. We looked at the sky during the siren. We saw Scuds arrive from the northern direction and one looked like it blew up. It blew up in the sky."

The attack followed a barrage of seven Scud missiles launched from western Iraq on Friday night that killed one person and wounded 66.

"I heard the second siren when I was standing outside," said another witness on Israel Radio.

"Suddenly I saw two points of light from a direction I don't want to give... and at the same time I saw a point of light fall to the ground."

"After 20 seconds I heard a blast."

Najaf

(Continued from page 1)

seven houses were flattened. Local people told the CNN correspondent that seven people were killed and 50 wounded in that area.

The Iraqi authorities have for four days been taking Arnett to see damage in residential areas, attempting to rebut U.S. and allied claims that the accuracy of their air raids keeps civilian casualties to a minimum.

Arnett said he could not independently confirm that there were no military targets in or near the damaged areas of Najaf but "what I saw was a lot of little, simple concrete houses."

Britain said Sunday that it had been reassuring Muslim states that holy sites in Iraq have not been damaged by allied air bombardment.

"Throughout allied operations, great care has been taken to avoid damage to religious sites and to avoid civilian casualties," said a statement issued by the Foreign Office.

"Our commanders have been fully briefed on the location of religious sites. There is no foundation to Iraq's allegation that allied aircraft have deliberately attacked Shi'ite shrines at Karbala and Najaf."

Britain's charge d'affaires in Tehran, David Reddaway, was instructed to tell the Iranian Foreign Ministry that allied target bombing was intended to avoid cultural and religious sites.

British ambassadors have been ordered to send messages to their host governments stressing that bomb and missile attacks are aimed only at strategic targets.

Iraq says two Muslim shrines, in Karbala and Najaf, have been damaged in bombing raids, a Foreign Office spokesman said.

Life seemed nearly normal in other areas of Najaf, Arnett said. On the road between Baghdad and Najaf, truck traffic was heavy. Farmers were working in nearby fields.

Protests came from across Germany, arriving in 28 specially arranged trains and 650 buses. Many people protested German firms who allegedly helped Iraq produce chemical weapons and improve its nuclear technology.

Rock music filled the chilly air, provided by a band performing on a huge stage set up on the university lawn. "We won't allow the future's destruction. Stop the war," read an enormous banner strung above the stage.

Students with dyed hair, Middle East immigrants, militant communists, middle-age parents pushing strollers, and others swarmed onto the university lawn.

"All imperialists out of the Gulf region," read a placard carried by a young German.

"George and Saddam, put down your arms," read another. In Paris, leftist youths, some armed with baseball bats, stoned police and journalists at the end of a demonstration against the Gulf war.

The violence erupted at the end of a noisy march by about 10,000 demonstrators, most of whom had left the area before the incident, police said. There were no immediate reports of injuries or arrests.

The demonstration, called by the French Communist Party and pacifist movements, drew far fewer than the 40,000 people who turned out for a similar march just before the war started.

Opinion polls show support for French participation in the war up since fighting began, with nearly 75 per cent backing for France's involvement on the allied side.

"As many as 2,000 veterans of war from World War II through Vietnam were in the American crowd. Among them was Michael Pablos from New York."

"We are supporting our men... and yet we think this thing is wrong. I feel that the next 10 to 15 years we'll be paying for this," said Pablos, a Vietnam veteran.

Reflecting lawmakers' political concerns against speaking out against the Gulf war, only one member of Congress was scheduled to speak, Representative Charles Rangel, a Democrat.

New Republican Party leader Clayton Yeutter touched off a political storm last week by saying Democrats who opposed giving President George Bush the right to wage war were "politically vulnerable."

Despite protesters taking to the streets to oppose the war, polls show solid and growing public backing for President Bush's policies.

According to a Cable News Network/Gallup poll, 87 per cent of those surveyed on Jan. 23-24 approved of Mr. Bush's handling of the war, up from 84 per cent a week earlier.

Anti-Iraq allies fear prolonged war

By Patrick Wornip
Reuter

LONDON — One week into the Gulf war, the fire of battle has hardened the coalition seeking to drive Iraqi forces out of Kuwait, but some allies look vulnerable if the conflict goes badly or drags on too long.

The main Western combatants — the United States, Britain and France — enjoy strong support at home for their action so far. A massive aerial bombardment of Iraq and Kuwait that has brought minimal allied casualties.

By and large, if Arab and Islamic allies have also remained steadfast to the anti-Iraq cause, their position eased by the fact that Israel has not so far taken any active role in the war despite a series of Iraqi missile attacks on Tel Aviv.

But several of them have shown signs of unease in the face of a

rising tide of pro-Iraq sentiment among the general public that seems bound to intensify the longer the war continues.

The rallying of Western public behind their governments is well illustrated in France, where latest opinion polls show some 70 per cent backing French participation in the war.

Polls published just before the conflict broke out on Jan. 17 showed a slight majority opposed French involvement.

Washington and London had seen France as the weakest Western link in the coalition when President Francois Mitterrand tried to head it off by offering to seek the international Middle East conference demanded by Baghdad.

But since the war erupted, Mitterrand has sought to appear a loyal ally, authorising the French air force to attack targets in Iraq as well as Kuwait despite the domes-

tic political risk of alienating France's five million Muslims.

Nevertheless, it had been clear that NATO and the European Community have been far from unified over the Kuwait crisis. NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner said on Thursday it had highlighted "how great the differences of view" had been.

Some West European diplomats predict there could be long-term resentment in Washington over what it sees as patchy support from the allies, some of whom have sent only one or two ships to the Gulf as their contribution to the war effort.

"There's been a lot of noise from Washington about the poor performance of the Europeans," one said.

Germany, citing a constitutional ban on making war outside the NATO area, has sent no forces at all to the Gulf, though it has sent

18 fighter planes to Turkey to boost Ankara's defences and has pledged \$2 billion in aid for the allies.

Spain, which has seen some of Europe's biggest demonstrations against the war, has made diplomatic contacts with Arab countries in a bid to stop the fighting.

Much of the European distress... over the Gulf concerns not so much the war itself, to which most European capitals now seem resigned, but over what should follow.

Several West European countries backed the failed French initiative to propose a Middle East conference, despite U.S. rejection of such "linkage" with the Gulf crisis. The issue seems bound to resurface when the fighting stops.

In the Arab and Islamic world, the crisis has created a deep fissure that looks set to persist long after the war is over, but those govern-

ments which have backed the coalition have shown no signs of wavering so far.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who has sent 45,000 troops to the Gulf, on Thursday dismissed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's claim to be championing the Palestinian cause.

"His claim... is but a manoeuvre to deceive the Arab people and arouse sentiments... to cover his occupation of Kuwait and erase it from existence," he told parliament.

Syria, too, has sharply attacked Saddam, accusing him of plunging the region into a disastrous war and signalling that it will not let Baghdad's missile strikes on Tel Aviv embolden Damascus in a fresh Arab-Israeli conflict.

But the issue is a delicate one for both governments, all too aware how susceptible many Arabs, and especially the Muslim

fundamentalists who exist in both countries, are to Saddam's argument that this is a conflict between Islam and the West.

This reasoning has attracted a lot of support in North Africa. Morocco, though a contributor to the multinational force, joined other Maghreb states this week in pushing for a U.N. Security Council meeting on the allied air raids on Iraq.

Western diplomats say they are most worried about Pakistan, where daily demonstrations have been held in support of Saddam and the opposition has demanded that the government bring home the 11,000 troops it has sent to Saudi Arabia.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, whose Pakistan Muslim League called on Wednesday for an immediate ceasefire in the Gulf, set off this week on a peace mission to Iran and other Muslim countries.

Children 'jump out of their skin in Baghdad'

By Samia Nakhoul
Reuter

RUWEISHED — Screaming children cower in terror in Baghdad's bomb shelters as the thunder of air raids mingles with the roar of anti-aircraft fire, refugees from the Gulf war said.

"It makes the children jump out of their skins," Mohammad Abdul-Kader, a journalist for the Palestinian News Agency Wafa, said after reaching Jordan.

"The main worry for families

is the children. They were terrified and screaming and crying as soon as they heard the planes. In my shelter they were sobbing and crying all the time," he told reporters at the Ruweished border post.

The United States and its allies launched the Gulf war last Thursday with intensive air raids on what the coalition says are military and strategic in Iraq and Kuwait.

Refugees reaching this litter-strewn crossing with Iraq said the bombing of Baghdad, turned into a ghost town, was being conducted around the

clock but still meeting fierce anti-aircraft fire.

None had reliable details of casualties or civilian buildings hit.

"The bombing is beyond imagination. It goes on all the time and people can't distinguish the explosion of bombs from anti-aircraft fire. Incoming and outgoing sounds mingle and you can't tell one from the other," Abdul-Kader said.

"I could see fires burning miles from where we were," said Bruce Wolcott, an American anti-war campaigner who left Baghdad on Monday.

"Everybody I talked to in Iraq is worried and concerned about their families and especially their food and water. They are also worried about Israel attacking," Wolcott said.

Most shops in central Baghdad remained closed and though a few had opened in some neighbourhoods they were running short of food, he said. Fuel, water and medicine were also scarce.

Children in shelters were eating canned food and biscuits for lack of cooking facilities, said Abdul-Kader.

He and other travellers said

air strikes had hit an oil refinery at Dora just outside Baghdad. Wolcott said bridges over the River Tigris were still intact when he left.

Reuter Photographer Patrick De Noirmont, who reached Amman late Sunday night, said a refinery southwest of Baghdad was heavily bombed last Saturday.

Lakh Birsingh, one of 50 Indian construction workers who fled the Iraqi capital by bus, said of the refinery raid:

"We saw the fire rising from the refinery, orange glows

coming out. It raged for one hour before we heard the fire engines coming to put it out."

Abdul-Kader and many of the Indians said Iraqi paramilitary popular army volunteers would seal off bombed areas after raids, making it impossible to assess damage or casualties.

"We've seen the fighting in the Iran-Iraq war and we've seen war between India and Pakistan but this time it's different," said Sharma Pissarna, an Indian labourer.

"It is scary. This is real war."

Baghdad

(Continued from page 1)

"Earlier today, United States F-15s have shot down three Iraqi MiGs," said Mike Scott, a spokesman for central command.

In subsequent reports, it's believed that the aircraft are MiG-23s and they've gone down over Iraq," Colonel Scott said.

The U.S. allies claim to have destroyed 46 Iraqi planes.

The allies have reported losing 22 planes: 18 in combat and four to mechanical problems. Twenty-seven allied fighters have been listed as missing in action. They include 14 Americans, 10 Britons, two Italians and one Kuwaiti. One American has been confirmed killed.

Baghdad Radio broadcast a message to Arab soldiers in the multinational force, urging them to abandon their nations' alliance with the United States.

"My God, tell me whether you are not pleased to have brothers who enjoy such strength and such determination," said the radio announcer. "Do you not feel proud to see us stand up against the Arabs' enemies, not scared or frightened? Then why do you not join us? We now represent the Arabs' awakening from the ocean to the Gulf."

It was not immediately determined if the broadcast, often interrupted by static, could be received in Saudi Arabia where the bulk of the coalition forces are gathered. In addition to Saudis and exiled Kuwaitis, tens of thousands of Syrian, Egyptian

and Moroccan troops are also part of the multinational contingent.

Iraq began broadcasting a new radio service it identified Saturday as the "Mother of Battles" radio. The service has been monitored on three shortwave and two medium wave frequencies. Three of the frequencies emanate from transmitters formerly belonging to Kuwait radio. The location of the other two is unknown, but could also be in Kuwait.

British Broadcasting Corporation monitors said the current Iraqi radio seems to be aimed at domestic listeners while "Mother of Battles" radio seems to be for a wider audience in the Arab World.

The Baghdad Radio broadcast boasted of a "severe missile strike" at Riyadh, "the capital of the immoral Saudi rulers," before midnight Friday and another missile strike at Dhahran, site of a large allied air base, before dawn Saturday.

One Iraqi modified-Scud was intercepted near the Saudi capital by a U.S.-made Patriot missile Friday evening, but another sheared off part of a six-storey building housing government offices, witnesses said. One person was killed and 30 were injured, Saudi officials said.

Two more Scuds came in before dawn Saturday over the Dhahran-Dammam area in eastern Saudi Arabia, Saudi officials said. Patriots were fired and one was intercepted, but fragments of another hit the ground, they said. There were no immediate reports on damage or casualties.

2 killed

(Continued from page 1)

minutes to arrive to that shelter," he said.

French Prime Minister Michel Rocard telephoned his Israeli counterpart, Yitzhak Shamir, Saturday and expressed France's support, Mr. Rocard's office said.

He voiced "his emotion and that of the French people," after the Iraqi missile attacks against Tel Aviv.

France sent Junior Foreign Minister Thierry de Beauce to Israel this week as a special envoy of President Francois Mitterrand to express French solidarity.

The French action followed media reports of anti-French sentiment in Israel over past French arms supplies to Iraq.

Italy is sending a senior diplomat to Israel to express solidarity and press for movement on the Palestinian issue.

Bruno Bottai, a high-ranking Foreign Ministry official, was due in Israel Saturday to keep up Italy's contacts with all countries caught up in the Gulf war, a ministry statement said in Rome.

"In this moment one must make every effort to limit the conflict," it said.

The statement said Italy wanted to express "human solidarity for the victims caused by indiscriminate Iraqi missile attacks."

But it also stressed that Italy wanted to urge Israel to "move out of a political stalemate lasting for years on the Palestinian problem."

U.S.-Soviet summit

By Barry Schweld

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Soviet support for the United States and its allies in trying to force Iraq out of Kuwait may not be enough to save the Moscow summit and prevent a further slide in superpower relations.

The crackdown in the Baltic republics has evoked outrage in the White House and Congress. Even if President George Bush were inclined to stick to the schedule arranged in happier times and see Soviet Leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev next month, domestic politics may make it impossible.

A presidential decision on whether to postpone the meeting, which would accelerate the slide, is expected in the next few days. Much probably depends on the talks Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh will hold with Secretary of State James A. Baker beginning Saturday.

Anti-Soviet sentiment subsided during Gorbachev's era of good feelings and unilateral troop and weapons reductions, but never vanished completely. The current crackdown in the Baltics has brought that sentiment to a boil, especially on Capitol Hill.

This week, the Senate and House passed resolutions crit-

cising the Soviets for their actions. The mood is getting nastier, and the one billion dollars credits Bush pledged only last month to help the Soviets purchase food could be imperilled.

Similarly, Congress could reject Bush's recommendation that tariffs be reduced to permit Soviet imports to compete on an equal footing with other countries' goods.

It's hard to see what Bessmertnykh could bring from Moscow to cool this sentiment.

Perhaps the foreign minister can offer guarantees the Kremlin will order the troops to abandon the tactics that led to 19 deaths in Lithuania and Latvia, but that is unlikely.

Whatever happens, Baker, for one, would like to rescue the strategic arms reduction treaty, which Bush and Gorbachev has hoped to sign at the Feb. 11-13 summit.

U.S. and Soviet negotiators have been meeting at the State Department since last Monday to try to iron out the remaining differences. Most deal with procedures for ensuring compliance with the cutsbacks in long-range nuclear missiles, bombers and submarines.

"Work remains," State Department spokeswoman Margaret D. Tutwiler on Thursday quoted Chief U.S. negotiator Reginald Bartholomew as

saying. Also, the Bush administration would like to see the Soviets get their troops out of East Germany and Poland. A revival of East-West tensions could derail the withdrawals.

And, of course, Soviet support for the campaign against Iraq is important to the mission's success.

Moscow has not contributed troops to the conflict. But the Soviets cooperated with the United States in the diplomacy that produced the U.N. Security Council resolution in November authorising force to get Iraq to relinquish Kuwait.

Bessmertnykh has just succeeded Edward A. Shevardnadze, who quit as foreign minister in December with an impassioned warning that reactions threatened the Soviet Union with dictatorship.

Bessmertnykh is a longtime specialist in U.S. and Middle East issues and most recently served as Soviet Ambassador to Washington, but he may not have Shevardnadze's influence.

Shevardnadze negotiated with Baker as a Politburo member. Bessmertnykh does not have that status.

He will be in Washington through Tuesday and possibly Wednesday. Besides meeting with Baker he will call on Brent Scowcroft,

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Seles wins 2nd Grand Slam title

MELBOURNE (AP) — Being a tennis champion means being able to adapt your game, battle tough conditions and win the big points. That's what Monica Seles did Saturday, and that's why she is the youngest women's champion of the Australian Open and on the verge of no. 1 in the world.

With her usually powerful baseline game producing more errors than winners and the Australian summer sun turning center court into a frying pan, Seles decided to change tack and go to the net against Jana Novotna.

It was "an overall serve-and-volley offensive, but the strategy worked." While continuing to get most of her points from the baseline, Seles pressured Novotna into hurried shots and poor placement in the second and third sets and won her second Grand Slam title 5-7, 6-3, 6-1.

She won nine of the last 10 games and allowed just five points in a five-game run at the start of the third set that left her in command.

"I was trying to hit some slice and I was volleying well," Seles said. "This is probably the best I have come to the net. After the first set, I needed to win the points."

Seles, at 17 years, some four months younger than Margaret Court when she won the Australian title in 1960, is just 38 points behind Steffi Graf atop the women's rankings.

The change — and it would be historic, since Graf has been no. 1 for a record 180 weeks — could come as early as next week in Tokyo. For the time being, Novotna, who beat Graf in the

quarterfinals, thinks the German is best, but that Seles is a tougher opponent to beat.

"Steffi has a weakness (backhand passing shots), which you can take advantage of," the 10th seed said. "Monica has other weaknesses, but it is very difficult to use them. She is not as quick moving forward, perhaps, but how can you use a dropshot against her when she keeps you at the baseline?"

Seles is satisfied to be no. 2 — for the time being.

"I still think the ranking is a very fair ranking," she said.

"I think I can get a lot better. I have to."

Seles wants to add a power serve, a net game and a more classic style to her bag. She'll take some time off to work on that, and hope for a second straight French Open victory in June.

The seeds of that triumph, if it comes, may have been sown on the hardcourts of Flinders Park, where temperatures reached 130 degrees Fahrenheit (54 Celsius) on the rubberized surface.

One element of Seles' usual game that was missing at first was her grunting. For the first two points, she was silent — and lost both points on her serve on the way to being broken.

The grunts came back, but the winners were rare, and Novotna was showing signs of an upset just as she did against Graf in the quarters. That victory was based on big serves and thundering volleys, but against Seles the underdog was content to stay back and watch the errors flow.

Seles broke back to tie the set 3-3, but Novotna got another

break in the 11th game on Seles errors and held on a backhand crosscourt volley.

"When she came back and then I broke, I knew I could hold my serve," Novotna said. "But the first set took a lot out of me."

Novotna pulled a hamstring muscle on one point late in the set, and that may have slowed her down later. But she thought she was moving as fast as ever.

"It's her shots that make you look slower," she said.

Seles opened the second set more aggressive and took a 3-0 lead.

"At the start of the second set, I got mad and said, 'play. You can't play that way against her,'" Seles said. "She was just trying to slow the pace."

Seles argued several line calls and was agitated by Novotna taking her time between points. She also was creeping toward the net, and blunting Novotna's volleying efforts with crisp passing shots.

Novotna tied it 3-3 but that was her last gasp. Seles held on a forehand winner, then evened the match with a break and a hold in which all her points came on Novotna errors.

Novotna held to open the third set but Seles held at love and broke on a long overhead for 2-1. The big silver trophy and the stuffed wombat that go to the champion were as good as in the luggage back to Sarasota, Florida, where the Yugoslav native has been based for five years.

"When I broke at 30 and held my serve, I felt I was on top," she said.

She ran off three more games



Monica Seles

to 5-1 with the loss of just one point in each. Novotna had one more chance, going to 40-0 in the seventh game, but she couldn't convert.

Seles saved five game points, the last with a bullet forehand service return down the line, and moved to match point when Novotna double faulted. She then netted a backhand volley, her 52nd unforced error of the match, and Seles was skipping in joy toward the net.

"It's great to win a second Grand Slam and not be labelled a clay-court player," Seles said.

Lendl chases Australian treble

MELBOURNE (R) — Ivan Lendl aims for his third successive Australian Open crown Sunday but must beat Boris Becker for the first time in a Grand Slam tournament to complete the rare treble.

Second seed Becker, who will become world number one if he wins the final, has beaten his Czechoslovak rival in all their four previous Grand Slam encounters.

Both feel Grand Slams are the tournaments which really matter, and Lendl went so far as to describe the rest as exhibitions as he rolled onwards here at Flinders Park.

"I am always hungry for a Grand Slam title. It comes from enjoying it so much," he said this week.

Becker, who had never progressed beyond the Australian Open quarter-finals before this year, said tennis for him was about Grand Slams and the Davis Cup.

"It's very tough, first of all, to win seven matches to go all the way. You play the best of the best. Over two weeks many things can happen," the German said after his four-set semifinal win over unseeded American Patrick McEnroe.

"For me, to be a great champion really means how many Grand Slam titles you have won."

Becker has notched four so far — three Wimbledon wins, the first at only 17 years of age, and one U.S. Open crown.

Lendl, who is contesting his 19th Grand Slam final, has collected eight — three French, three U.S. and two Australian.

But he has yet to administer a Grand Slam defeat on Becker, his conqueror in the 1986 Wimbledon final, the Wimbledon semifinals of 1988 and 1989 and the 1989 U.S. Open final.

Third seed Lendl received a big confidence boost in Friday's semifinals when he survived two match-points to beat top seed Stefan Edberg of Sweden.

But that is not enough for the 30-year-old Czechoslovak. "The job is not done yet. I didn't come here to beat Stefan and be in the finals. I came here to win the tournament," he said.

Lendl and Becker enter their 19th head-to-head clash with nine wins apiece between them. Honours were even in 1990 with two wins for each.

Both had major scares in their passage to the final in which Lendl aims to become the first man to win three Australian singles titles in succession since Australia's Roy Emerson, who won five times between 1963 and 1967.

Becker battled over five hours — the longest match in Australian Open history — in overcoming unseeded Italian Omar Camporese in the third round.

Austrian wins women's downhill in World Skiing Championships

SAALBACH-HINTER-GLIMM, Austria (AP) — Petra Kronberger overcame a slow start by reaching speeds of up to 111 kilometres per hour in mid-course to win the women's downhill Saturday at the World Alpine Skiing Championships.

Kronberger, an Austrian who is favoured in all five events at the championships, finished in 1 minute, 29.12 seconds to defeat Frenchwoman Nathalie Bouvier by nearly half a second.

Bouvier's time of 1:29.56 on the 2,361-metre Aster Course, which had a drop of 730 metres, was seven-hundredths of a second faster than bronze medalist Svetlana Gladishiva of the Soviet Union.

Kronberger, 21, a bank employee who has dominated women's skiing during the past two seasons, posted slower split times at the top of the course than several competitors and did not take control until midway through her run.

"I wasn't very good at the start," she said. "But when I was in the middle of the course, I thought, 'it's running now, it's running now.' And at the end, where the most steep part was, I felt I was running at my best."

Gladishiva, who was world junior downhill champion last year, became the first Soviet skier to win a World Championship medal.

"I am a little bit surprised, although I had excellent times in training," she said. "I thought maybe I could get into second or third place, but still I'm a little surprised."

On Friday, Kronberger had taken a major step toward another gold medal by finishing second to teammate Sabine Ginter in the downhill portion of the combined event.

That left Kronberger in an excellent position to take the combined title when the event is completed next Thursday with the slalom. Kronberger is the world's top female slalomist, while Ginter is a downhill specialist.

Chantal Bourmisen of Switzerland, another downhill specialist who has made some progress in the slalom, was third in the combined downhill.

Kronberger said Friday she was happy to have the first race behind her.

"With everyone talking about me being the favourite, it was becoming unbearable," she said. Meanwhile, Swiss team officials announced Friday that Karl Fehrer would be leaving his post as chief men's coach at the end of the World Championships.

Fehrer, 51, joined the Swiss Federation in 1977 and, with such stars as four-time overall World Cup champion Pirmin Zurbriggen and two-time downhill champion Peter Mueller, made Switzerland the dominant team of the 1980s.

Fehrer long has clashed with Swiss competition chief Paul Beringer over responsibility for rac-

ing decisions.

Men's downhill practice

Meanwhile, Daniel Mahrer and Swiss teammate Franz Heinzer posted the fastest practice times Saturday for the men's downhill, threatening the favourites for Sunday's event at the World Championships.

Mahrer, who won a World Cup downhill in Garmisch-Partenkirchen earlier this month, completed the 2,990-metre Schatzkogel Course in 1 minute, 55.88 seconds at an average speed of 92.09 kilometres per hour.

Heinzer, the most successful World Cup downhill specialist this season with two victories and a runner-up finish in five races, trailed Mahrer by 0.29 seconds.

The steep downhill course, criticised by some skiers as being too difficult and unsafe at some points, claimed three more injuries Saturday.

Norwegian Kjell Andre Aamodt, a specialist in super-G and giant slalom races, suffered a facial laceration and light brain

trauma when he fell at high speed. He was the second top Norwegian skier knocked out after Lasse Kjus was injured in Friday's practice.

Norwegian officials said Aamodt will miss Sunday's downhill but may race the super-G and giant slalom next week. Kjus, who is hospitalised in Salzburg, will be out for the rest of the championships, which end Feb. 3.

Late starters Adrian Bires of Czechoslovakia and Alexis Racloz of Chile were also injured in spills Saturday. Bires sprained his thumb, Racloz the ligaments of the right wrist.

The Swiss team seeks the first championship medal in Sunday's race after missing the three top spots in two men's and one women's events contested so far.

The powerful Austrian team had Patrick Ortlieb in third place and veterans Leonard Stock and Erwin Resch placed eighth and ninth respectively.

Austrian Helmut Hoeflechner, the fastest in early practice runs Thursday and Friday, lagged 35th or 3.33 seconds behind Mahrer.

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THE BETTER HALF. By Harris



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

STURY
ENVAH
GAWHE
DOLFIN

WHAT THEY SAID TO THE NUT WHO CLAIMED TO HAVE INVENTED A NEW TYPE OF SIEVE.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: "THAT WON'T" (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumble: HELLO FRAME GOLFER MAROON
Answer: What the arrival of spring after a miserable winter should bring—"RE-LEAF"

Sainz commands Monte Carlo Rally from start

MONTÉ CARLO (R) — Spain's Carlos Sainz started his World Championship defence in style Saturday as he led the field halfway through the first day of the Monte Carlo Rally.

Sainz, who finished last year's event a few seconds behind French winner Didier Auriol, reversed the order in the initial tests on the hilly roads above the principality.

The Spaniard headed the first two timed stages and his Toyota team mate Armin Schwarz of Germany took the third.

Sainz gained a solid 17 seconds advantage over Auriol, with former world champion Massimo Biasion of Italy, also in a Lancia, third.

"There will be no tactics. The Monte Carlo Rally is the highlight of the rallying season. Only victory matters," Toyota's team manager Ove Andersson said.

Sainz followed those instructions, attacking from the start on roads made slippery by ice on shaded sections.

Spectators even swept some snow on to the road at the top of the famous Turini Pass to provide the 165 drivers with added drama.

Finnish veteran Hannu Mikkola, world champion in 1983, was the first big name to pull out because of ignition trouble to his Mazda.

Other favourites had their problems too. Schwarz ended the second special with a puncture, while Frenchman Bruno Saby, in a Lancia, left the road but managed to continue.

Auriol led the 165 competitors of the Monte Carlo Rally into the Mediterranean principality Friday, at the end of the long liaison stage from several European cities.

Petrenko skates his way to 2nd championship title

SOFIA (AP) — Viktor Petrenko of the Soviet Union won the men's title for a second time Friday with a stunning jumping performance at the European Figure Skating Championships.

Petrenko, second in the World Championships to Canadian Kurt Browning last March, had six triple jumps that included a triple axel just 30 seconds from the end of his routine.

In the final free programme, Petrenko gained marks of 5.8 and 5.9 for technical merit and all 5.9's with a single 6.0 for artistic impression. He skated to a med-

ley of classical music. Czechoslovakia's Peter Barna was second and another Soviet, Viacheslav Zagorodniuk, was third.

Earlier in the competition, 17-year-old Alexei Urmanov of the Soviet Union completed a quadruple toe loop to become the second person to complete a four-revolution jump in an international competition.

He finished sixth overall. Two Frenchmen, Eric Millot and Philippe Candeloro, were fourth and fifth.

UEFA penalises over 20 soccer clubs, teams

ZURICH (Agencies) — The Union of European Football Association (UEFA) announced Saturday sanctions against more than 20 soccer clubs and national teams for misconduct by players and fans, with Atalanta Bergamo and F.C. Bologna drawing the stiffest fines.

In other decisions, UEFA's Control and Disciplinary Commission barred Wales' Clayton Blackmore from his team for the next four European Championship games for physically attacking an opponent during the Nov. 14 championship game at Luxembourg.

Spain was penalised for spectator misconduct during its "under 21" game against Albania at Huelva on Dec. 18. It was ordered to host its next game — against France — at a stadium that is at least 150 kilometres away from Huelva. In addition, the Spanish Association was fined 10,000 Swiss francs (\$8,000).

Atalanta Bergamo was fined 25,000 francs (\$20,000) for the throwing of firecrackers by fans during the Dec. 12 UEFA Cup game against F.C. Cologne at Bergamo.

Bologna drew a 20,000-franc (\$16,000) fine for similar unrul-

ness by its fans during the UEFA Cup game Nov. 28 against Admira Wacker at Vienna. The hosts were ordered to pay 15,000 francs (\$12,000).

The German Association was fined 10,000 francs (\$8,000) for disturbances by fans during the Oct. 31 European Championship game against Luxembourg.

Among other individual players sanctioned were: — Dietmar Kuehnbauer, Admira Wacker, barred from three European club competition games for attacking an opponent during the Dec. 12 game against F.C. Bologna.

— Andrei Alexanenko, Dynamo Kiev, for two European club competition games for "especially incorrect conduct," during cup Cupwinners Cup game against Dukha Prague on Nov. 7.

Italy's Stefania Antonini made history Saturday by becoming the first woman soccer player to be banned by UEFA.

UEFA said Antonini was banned one match for foul play in a European Championship match against Sweden in December.

Bulgaria's national soccer trainer Ivan Vutsov was handed a three-year touchline ban Friday,

Mutt'n'Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANIAH HIRSCH
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NORTH

♠ 10 2

♥ 9 4 2

♦ J 6

♣ K J 10 9 8 4

WEST

♠ J 8 7 5

♥ J 5

♦ Q 10 8 5 3 2

♣ A 7 5 3 2

EAST

♠ A K Q 9 4 3

♥ A Q 10 3

♦ A 7

♣ Q

SOUTH

West North East South

Pass Pass Pass 1 ♠

Pass 1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠

Pass 3 ♠ Pass 3 ♠

Pass 3 ♠ Pass 3 NT

Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Six of ♠

What happens when two of the world's great pairs meet in a team match? Spectacular bridge? Well, judge for yourselves. This hand from an Italy-France encounter features Pietro Forquet and Benito Garozzo, North-South for the Blue Team, and Georges Theron and Gerard Desrosseaux, East and West, respectively, for the French.

To all intents and purposes the

action started with a forcing bid of two spades and, thereafter, was natural, if slightly off target. The best game for North-South is five clubs, but that's not easy to reach.

Had West made the seemingly natural lead of a diamond, the contract would have been doomed from the outset. Dummy's king of clubs was played to the first trick, losing to East's ace. A diamond shift would have been deadly, but East elected to lead a low heart; declarer ducked, West won the jack and returned the suit to declarer's ten.

By now, Garozzo must have thought that both defenders were void of diamonds. So grateful was he for their munificence that he overlooked a virtually sure-trick line for his contract! All he had to do was fire back the nine of spades. If it is allowed to hold, declarer has six spade tricks, two hearts and a diamond. If it loses to the jack, dummy's ten of spades becomes an entry to the five good clubs and declarer will make an overtrick. Instead, Garozzo played spades from the top and could make no more than eight tricks when, on winning the jack of spades, West was forced to lead a diamond because he had nothing else in his hand!

Guerre filtrée

Le mythe de la caverne

La guerre du Golfe, qui sévit depuis plus d'une semaine, donne lieu à une débauche rarement égalée d'informations contradictoires, où foisonnent communiés et démentis, propagande et coups de ciseaux des censeurs, rendant bien difficile de se faire une idée précise de ce qui se passe réellement sur le terrain. Dans cette situation professionnellement difficile — mais aussi en fonction de leurs intérêts et de leurs sympathies —, les médias de tous bords déforment à plaisir la réalité dans le sens qui leur convient. La vox-populi, elle, a trouvé sa riposte (qui ne fait que renforcer la confusion) en répandant des rumeurs qui lui plaisent et qui la rassurent.

Deux semaines avant le déclenchement de la guerre, le visage de Saddam Hussein apparaissait sur la face visible de la lune, au dessus du village de Tafleh, en Jordanie. L'air sombre et tranquille sous son keffiyeh, le président irakien put être contemplé pendant quelques instants par les chanceux habitants de Tafleh et de Salt.

LA SEMAINE...

de Suleiman Sweiss

Guerre: premier bilan

Dix jours après le début de la guerre que les Etats-Unis et leurs alliés ont déclarée contre l'Irak, une grande inquiétude envahit le monde, et plus particulièrement les peuples du Proche-Orient. Les raisons de cette inquiétude sont claires et simples: cette guerre est injuste, barbare et dévastatrice.

L'Irak n'a pas occupé la Californie et Saddam Hussein ne menaçait pas les Etats-Unis autant ou plus que Fidel Castro ne le faisait.

«Occupation du Koweït»? Alors, pourquoi ces alliés n'ont-ils pas déclaré la guerre à la Turquie quand elle a occupé la moitié de l'île de Chypre en juillet 1974? Et que diraient les alliés des dizaines de résolutions de l'ONU sur la Palestine qu'elle ne s'est pas gênée de jeter à la poubelle? Et les plateaux du Golan, et le Sud-Liban, ne sont-ils pas des territoires occupés? Incontestablement, l'odeur du pétrole transforme les hommes «civilisés» en guerriers fidèles aux lois de la jungle qu'en croyait révoquer en cette fin du vingtième siècle.

De la crise du Golfe, nous voici donc plongés dans la guerre du Golfe. Le plus douloureux et le plus inquiétant est que cette guerre semble devoir être longue. Après les premiers communiqués qui criaient victoire du côté des alliés, voici les prévisions pessimistes des généraux et hommes politiques qui parlent maintenant de «mois» de guerre. Il s'avère aujourd'hui que c'était James Baker et non Tarek Aziz qui avait «mal calculé la détermination de son adversaire».

Une guerre de cette ampleur aurait des conséquences très graves sur l'ensemble de la région et sur le monde, aux points de vue stratégique, politique, économique et écologique.

Certes on ne peut préciser ces conséquences alors que la guerre n'en est qu'à son début. Mais d'ores et déjà on peut dresser un premier bilan.

1) L'objectif réel de cette guerre est la destruction militaire, économique et probablement démographique de l'Irak. C'est pourquoi nous disons que cette guerre est injuste et détestable pour tous les hommes libres du monde. Ces derniers jours, il devient clair que les raids visent les civils pour compenser l'échec des destructions d'objectifs militaires.

2) Les missiles irakiens lancés sur Tel Aviv, Haïfa et Jérusalem la semaine dernière ont détruit le mythe soigneusement entretenu d'Israël Etat invincible. Cet ennemi gonflé par la faiblesse des régimes arabes pro-américains s'est révélé vulnérable et, de nouveau, il a besoin de la protection américaine car il se rend compte qu'il est en face d'un ennemi redoutable.

3) Il est certain aujourd'hui qu'un Etat du Tiers-Monde, en l'occurrence un Etat arabe, est capable d'assimiler la science et la technologie, de construire une puissance militaire moderne et même d'affronter une grande puissance telle que les Etats-Unis. Les peuples arabes ont toutes les raisons désormais d'être fiers et de retrouver la confiance en eux-mêmes. Grâce aux Irakiens, les Arabes ont détruit un autre mythe, longtemps entretenu, selon lequel l'homme arabe est incapable de manier la technologie. L'effet est beaucoup plus profond car celui qui est capable de planifier et de construire une puissance militaire et technologique, l'est certainement dans les domaines économique et social. N'oublions pas que c'est dans la guerre que se manifeste l'intelligence et la faculté d'un peuple.

4) Cette guerre a donné un nouveau souffle aux mouvements de paix à travers le monde, en particulier aux Etats-Unis et en Europe. Les manifestations d'hier dans les villes américaines en donnent la preuve. Cette guerre est celle des compagnies pétrolières et du complexe militaro-industriel aux Etats-Unis. Cette guerre est dirigée en fait contre tous les peuples du monde. C'est pourquoi, les manifestations anti-guerre vont se développer au fur et à mesure que la guerre se prolongera.

Devant l'obstination des alliés à continuer la guerre, seule la résistance des peuples arabes et la pression des mouvements pour la paix, notamment au sein des pays coalisés, pourront obliger Mars à changer d'avis.

Vous écrivez?

Si la plume vous démange, que vous écrivez en français... «Le Jourdain» vous ouvre ses deux pages hebdomadaires. Vos idées de sujets, locaux et régionaux, comme vos suggestions y sont les bienvenues.

Jean-Marc Bordes, French section, Jordan Times.
P.O. Box 6710, Tel: 667171.

Aussitôt, la rumeur se répand comme l'éclair dans tous les milieux. Quelques uns se reprochent de ne pas avoir regardé la lune cette nuit-là tandis que d'autres se consolent d'avoir échappé à cette vision en faisant entrer un «Saddam» dans leur famille. Les rapports des hôpitaux jordaniens font état de 412 nouveaux nés en Jordanie auxquels on a donné le nom de Saddam, phénomène qui reflète la fierté et l'admiration éprouvées pour cet homme.

Un mélange de joie et d'amour a continué de se développer autour de Saddam, même après le déclenchement de la guerre. Les maisons et les rues ne se voient pas des photos et des souvenirs à l'éphigie de l'homme de Bagdad. Sa puissance et ses attaques répétées contre Israël éveillent dans l'esprit des Jordaniens des images ancrées depuis des décennies: l'unité arabe, la libération des présences étrangères, etc. Leurs espérances les portent à croire que Moubarak a été assassiné, que la famille du roi Fahd s'est enfuie et que l'Iran soutient l'Irak.

Il est vrai que l'information, ces jours-ci, est tellement contradictoire et manifestement biaisée qu'elle laisse une large place au rêve et au mensonge. «Il y a une exagération flagrante dans les journaux jordaniens en arabe», affirme un journaliste étranger à Amman. On est un peu perdu et on ne sait plus que croire. Mais il reconnaît que cette exagération n'a pas beaucoup à envier à celle des médias étrangers.

Les moyens d'information font chaque jour la preuve de leur incapacité à délivrer le message clair et objectif dont parlent les universitaires. Tantôt parce qu'ils veulent préserver la sécurité

nationale, tantôt pour remonter le moral du public, tantôt enfin parce que l'information n'est tout simplement pas disponible et qu'il faut bien «produire».

Sur la même base d'informations contradictoires, le traitement est très différent d'un pays à l'autre. Selon l'Agence France Presse, la chaîne CNN est retransmise toute la journée par la télévision saoudienne, avec une interruption de diffusion systématique dès qu'il est question d'Israël.

Aux Etats-Unis, un procès a été intenté avant le déclenchement des hostilités contre le pentagone par les principales chaînes américaines (NBC, CBS, CNN) pour raisons de censure et de rétention d'informations. Les représentants de ces chaînes à Amman confirment que cette censure est exercée sur les événements en Arabie Saoudite.

«Je crois finalement que les médias jordaniens sont plus crédibles que tous les autres», affirme Rana Sahadi, employée du Ministère du Tourisme. Je n'écoute plus la

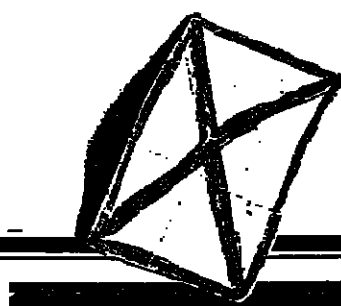
radio israélienne, sauf au moment des alertes ou d'événements importants pour savoir de quelle façon ils commentent les attaques de l'Irak». Des sentiments de joie et de jubilation s'emparent des Jordaniens malgré l'inquiétude et l'angoisse permanentes. Ils choisissent les chaînes qui conviennent à leur conception de ce conflit, se réjouissant des bonnes nouvelles (celles qui témoignent de la puissance de l'Irak) et rejetant toutes les autres nouvelles (susceptibles de porter atteinte à la dignité arabe et d'entamer leur confiance dans le leader irakien).

Confiance totale en un avenir brillant, qui ne quitte pas l'imagination fertile des jordaniens. Bien que la Jordanie ait perdu des milliards de dollars dans les secteurs du tourisme, de l'import-export, de l'industrie; malgré l'embargo imposé par les pays du Golfe, le retour des émigrés de ces pays, le chômage, etc., les Jordaniens sont sûrs que l'avenir est assuré et que tout ira bien. «Inchallah».

Certains journaux multi-

plient les citations d'experts et d'Ouleïmas annonçant l'émergence d'un homme fort qui conquerra le monde et vaincra les Occidentaux. «Le soleil des connaissances», livre écrit il y a des centaines d'années, comprend un poème très cité aujourd'hui, qui prédit la guerre actuelle avec une description détaillée proche de la situation actuelle.

Mais les étrangers sont loin d'être à l'écart de ce jeu. Leurs rumeurs ne sont qu'un peu plus élaborées. Certains journalistes et agenciers ont passé le plus clair de leur temps ici à la lecture de livres destinés à approfondir leurs connaissances de la région: «La guerre du Golfe», «La biographie du roi Hussein» et «L'Histoire des pays du Golfe» sont leurs livres de chevet. Ces vastes connaissances, qui les autorisent à transmettre les nouvelles de ce qui se passe ici dans le monde entier, ont parfois des failles regrettables. Un grand média canadien a envoyé un spécialiste en Jordanie, pour se rendre compte de la situation exacte et obtenir des



informations de première main: pour savoir notamment «si la Knesset était un mouvement basé en Jordanie ou en Israël», ou «si l'on voyageait toujours à dos de chameau dans la région»!

La victoire, en quelques heures ou quelques jours, de la coalition anti-irakienne est ainsi passée comme une information crédible auprès des auditeurs de l'ensemble des pays coalisés aux premiers jours de la guerre. La puissance mondiale des journalistes et des agences assure ainsi la diffusion des rumeurs autorisées. Des dizaines de dépêches se répandent à travers le monde sur l'incapacité de la puissance irakienne, sur la fuite de la famille de Saddam Hussein ou sur l'exécution des hauts responsables de l'armée de l'air irakienne.

Rivé à son poste de télévision, chacun reçoit ainsi l'information qu'il lui faut et trouve le confort et la tranquillité qu'il ne peut trouver en dehors de son abri, où

l'horrible réalité se déchaine. Il se contente des informations qui lui parviennent et veut plus savoir si le monde part, vraiment, en flammes ou non. Il préfère se plonger dans ses rêves d'indépendance ou de domination, de paix, d'amour ou de prospérité.

Voilà qui n'est pas satisfaisant. Rappelons le passage de la «République» de Platon sous le nom de «Mythe de la Caverne». Des individus attachés au fond d'une grotte ne voient du monde extérieur que les ombres qui se meuvent sur le fond de la caverne où pénètrent quelques rayons de soleil. N'ayant vu de toute leur vie que ce reflet partiel du monde extérieur ils l'ont pris pour sa totalité.

Platon affirmait que tout être qui s'habitue aux ténébreuses ne peut plus s'adapter à la lumière, heureuse qu'il est de vivre dans les ombres, qui sont la réalité pour lui.

Saada Kila



Dessins du peintre pacifiste canadien Carl Chaplin.

Semaine de guerre

DIMANCHE

-L'Irak lance trois missiles SCUD sur Riyad, qui sont détruits par trois missiles Patriot.

-Le président irakien déclare que l'Irak n'a utilisé qu'une petite fraction de ses forces jusqu'à présent et qu'il répondra aux attaques lancées par les troupes alliées.

-L'Irak déclare posséder 140 missiles cachés qui seront utilisés contre Israël.

-La télévision irakienne montre sept avions de la coalition capturés (3 américains, 2 britanniques, 1 italien et 1 koweïtien).

-L'OLP proclame que des «jets» israéliens ont été déployés sur les bases aériennes turques dans le but de participer au conflit.

LUNDI

-Les forces irakiennes tirent dix missiles SCUD en Arabie Saoudite dont neuf sont interceptés par des Patriots et un tombe dans les eaux du Golfe.

-L'Irak rejette une initiative de paix soviétique en affirmant que cette initiative doit être adressée au président américain.

-Bagdad utilise les prisonniers de guerre comme arme de dissuasion en les déployant sur les zones civiles.

-Raid des forces aériennes américaines depuis la Turquie contre l'Irak.

-Des rebelles kurdes affirment que 4.000 militaires irakiens ont été tués ou blessés par les bombardements des troupes alliées pendant les premiers jours de la guerre du Golfe.

-La France expulse 12 diplomates irakiens.

MARDI

-L'Irak bombarde Tel-Aviv provoquant la mort de trois personnes et faisant 96 blessés. Plusieurs immeubles sont détruits.

-L'Irak bombarde des champs de pétrole au Koweït.

-L'Irak accuse les forces américaines de bombardier des zones civiles et des sites sacrés.

-L'Irak montre deux nouveaux pilotes capturés à la télévision.

MERCREDI

-Une bombe ou un missile tue au moins une personne et en blesse une autre à la frontière jordanienne-irakienne, fermée par l'Irak le jour même.

-Bagdad met en garde Ankara contre les conséquences de son alliance avec la coalition.

-Bagdad affirme avoir arrêté un pilote britannique qu'il identifie comme Robert James Stewart.

-Radio Téhéran affirme qu'un groupe de soldats de la coalition a été fait prisonnier au cours d'une attaque de l'armée irakienne sur des positions alliées à la frontière de l'Arabie Saoudite.

-La Grande-Bretagne expulse une vingtaine d'Irakiens et en arrête plusieurs autres.

-Destruction de deux réacteurs nucléaires irakiens selon les Américains.

-Pour la première fois, un Patriot tiré depuis le nord d'Israël réussit à intercepter un SCUD irakien.

JEUDI

-Saddam rend visite à ses troupes sur le front et affirme que les troupes alliées seront punies.

-Les troupes irakiennes enflamment un puits de pétrole au Koweït dans le but de créer un écran de fumée sur le front.

-Ali Khamenei accuse Bush d'être un assassin qui mène cette guerre contre l'Irak sans clémence.

-Le Japon offre neuf milliards de dollars aux troupes alliées et des avions pour évacuer les réfugiés.

-Les bombardiers français Jaguar lancent leur premier raid en Irak depuis le début de la crise du Golfe.

-Rafsanjani affirme que l'Iran et la Syrie doivent réagir rapidement afin de mettre fin à la destruction du Koweït et de l'Irak.

-L'Allemagne expulse 28 diplomates irakiens en poste à Bonn et à Berlin.

-L'Irak koweïtien de Qurah a été «nettoyé» de la présence militaire irakienne selon l'agence koweïtienne «KUNA».

-Les Américains affirment avoir fait prisonniers 29 soldats irakiens à cette occasion. Bagdad répond que cette file avait déjà été abandonnée par ses soldats.

VENREDI

-Cinquième attaque contre Israël par l'Irak. Un mort et 69 blessés.

-Lancement de missiles SCUD sur l'Arabie Saoudite et Bahrein, dont un réussit à passer le barrage des Patriots et tombe sur Riyad, faisant un mort saoudien et 30 blessés.

-Rafsanjani affirme qu'entrer en guerre aux côtés de l'Irak serait un suicide.

-Les Irakiens déverseraient du pétrole dans les eaux du Golfe selon les Etats-Unis. Bagdad répond que les bombardements de la coalition au Koweït sont à l'origine de cette «fuite».

-Le ministère des Affaires Etrangères israélien affirme que la communauté européenne a supprimé toutes les restrictions imposées sur la coopération scientifique et commerciale avec Israël en raison de sa retenue face aux attaques des missiles irakiens.

SAMEDI

-Attentat à la bombe contre le journal «Libération» à Paris, causant des dégâts matériels sans faire de victime. Un tract retrouvé sur les lieux conduit les enquêteurs à établir un lien avec la guerre du Golfe.

-Sept avions irakiens, dont un en flammes, se posent d'urgence en Iran. Téhéran met en garde toutes les parties prenantes de la guerre contre une violation de ses frontières.

S.K.

Entretien du réseau parisien

Les robots sont dans le métro

Des robots qui voient tout, contournent les obstacles, savent s'arrêter au bord du quai et attendre une rame pour passer d'une station à l'autre, ça existe. La société gestionnaire du métro parisien vient de les «embaucher» pour l'entretien de ses stations. Grâce à eux les balayeurs traditionnels des stations vont se transformer en surveillants d'engins de haute technologie. Après le métro, pour lequel il s'agit encore d'une expérience, la pyramide du Louvre et certaines grandes entreprises pourraient ainsi être entretenues par des robots.

Depuis le mois de septembre 1990, six robots nettoient les quais, les couloirs et les billetteries du métro parisien. Il s'agit de CAB X (Combinés Autonomes de Balayage), engins de 450 kilos, de 140 cm de hauteur, de 170 cm de longueur et de 56 cm de largeur seulement, pour pouvoir se glisser dans les passages étroits. Leur système de roulement sur chenilles leur permet de gravir des escaliers ou de monter dans une rame de métro pour gagner une autre station à nettoyer. Leur moteur électrique dispose d'une autonomie de six heures et les fait avancer à la vitesse de 3,5 km/h.

Bien qu'ils soient programmés pour nettoyer de façon entièrement automatique, ils seront surveillés en permanence par un agent de la société chargée du nettoyage du métro, la Comatec. Tout en se consacrant aux parties accessibles au CAB X, telles que les sièges ou les poubelles, l'agent assurera que personne n'empêche le robot de remplir sa mission. L'avant de l'engin est équipé de brosses rotatives qui amènent les débris dans l'axe de la machine où ils sont aspirés vers un sac poubelle de cent litres.

Le CAB X circule et nettoie selon le programme informatique conçu pour lui. Il est guidé par un gyromètre à gaz ainsi que par les balises magnétiques qui au-

ront été implantées dans le sol. Un système de détection par ultrasons et par rayonnements infrarouges lui permet d'éviter aussi bien les vides que les obstacles. En cas de contact avec un voyageur, par exemple, il s'arrête instantanément.

Les six CAB X qui sont entrés en service à l'automne ne sont que l'avant-garde d'une armée de cent robots nettoyeurs qui débarqueront dans le métro à partir de septembre 1991. La Comatec a signé en effet, le 1er février dernier, un accord d'une durée de six ans avec une filiale de Renault pour la partie mécanique, et avec une filiale du Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique pour le contrôle-commande, le gyroscope et les capteurs, portant sur la fabrication de cent engins au prix unitaire d'un million de francs.

Cette innovation considérable a été lancée par la Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens (RATP) qui exploite le métro. Celle-ci éprouvait de grandes difficultés avec son service de nettoyage qui connaissait des grèves fréquentes chez un personnel payé au salaire minimum et insatisfait d'un travail peu gratifiant. Ce mécontentement latent se traduisait par un manque de propreté des quais et des couloirs auquel les voyageurs étaient de plus en plus sensibles. Les risques de désertion du métro étaient

réels. Aussi la RATP a-t-elle souhaité, dès 1985, moderniser de façon significative le nettoyage des installations en ayant recours à des machines très automatisées. Les gains de productivité devraient permettre de réduire le nombre des agents et de modifier leur condition: autrement dit, le recours au robot transformerait le balayeur en un surveillant-mieur rémunéré d'un engin de haute technologie.

Pour préparer cette révolution, la RATP et la Comatec ont lancé un programme de recherches d'un montant total de 70 millions de francs.

Un laboratoire du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) et une filiale de la Comatec ont travaillé sur la mesure de la distance par ultrasons. Le gyroscope s'est inspiré des instruments de navigation aérienne les plus modernes. Renault a donné son savoir-faire en matière d'engins à chenille. SAFT, ses batteries électriques de longue durée et de grande puissance.

Ce programme a donné à la Comatec l'envie d'aller plus loin dans la modernisation de ses tâches de nettoyage. Pour laver notamment les glaces de la pyramide du Louvre, les salles du musée d'Orsay ou les usines Renault, l'entreprise a déposé une vingtaine de brevets pour des robots lustreurs, aspirateurs, laveurs, capables de nettoyer vite et bien les façades d'immeubles, les trains, les vitres, les voies et les voitures.

Cette inventivité robotique a été récompensée, le 8 mars dernier, par un prix international qui a été attribué à la Comatec par l'Institut International de Promotion et de Prestige, organisation affiliée à l'UNESCO et regroupant 53 pays. En remettant ce prix, le professeur Maurice Lévy, ancien président de la Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, a souligné que cette récompense allait à une action menée, de façon exemplaire, dans la pluridisciplinarité et avec une «volonté tenace d'aboutir à du concret».

Demain, les robots seront dans le métro et les musées. A quand des automates domestiques?

Alain Faujas

3 pour 10.000

Suite à une erreur de composition, le taux de personnes droguées sur l'ensemble de la population jordanienne est apparu de façon erronée dans notre article de dimanche dernier intitulé «La lutte contre les trafiquants».

Faible pays de consommation, la Jordanie n'est affectée qu'à raison de 3 habitants pour 10.000 par l'usage des différentes drogues.

Nous prions les lecteurs du «Jourdain» de nous pardonner cette erreur technique.

Jordanie-Palestine

Le voyage impossible

Ce matin, comme tous les matins depuis plus d'une semaine, une trentaine de personnes attendent, dans le froid, le bus ou le taxi collectif qui pourrait les emmener jusqu'au pont Allenby pour qu'ils rentrent chez eux, en Palestine occupée.

Il est 6 heures du matin à la gare routière d'Abdali. La plupart de ceux qui sont là sont vieux et en ont assez de venir ainsi, de bon matin avec tous leurs bagages, pour s'entendre dire qu'ils ne pourront pas passer aujourd'hui et qu'il faudra retenter sa chance demain. La colère explose: «cela fait sept jours de suite que je viens ici pour rien avec ma sœur malade qui veut rentrer chez elle», s'empare Youssef, petit homme de cinquante ans, visiblement désemparé.

Officiellement pourtant le pont n'est pas fermé. Mais il l'est de fait. Les militaires israéliens qui le contrôlent ont fixé des quotas de passage qui varient au jour le jour. Ils montent dans les autocars arrivant de Jordanie et choisissent sur des critères mystérieux ceux qui passeront ou non. Hormis les personnes âgées de plus de 70 ans, pour qui l'entrée est automatiquement autorisée, les critères ne correspondent ni à l'âge, ni au sexe, ni à la condition sociale de l'individu. Pour preuve cette mère qui a dû passer plus de trois jours de ce côté-ci du pont avec ses trois enfants, se voyant systématiquement refuser l'entrée en Palestine.

Raison officielle de cette quasi fermeture du pont: le couvre-feu imposé par Israël sur la Cisjordanie, qui interdit aux taxis comme à toute autre voiture de circuler entre le Jourdain et Jérusalem. Passer le pont sans autorisation spéciale ne serait donc que tomber sur de nouveaux problèmes pour rejoindre son domicile, à Jérusalem ou ailleurs.

Ceux qui viennent ainsi chaque matin à Abdali, dans l'espoir d'une interruption momentanée de ces mesures, ne viennent pas toujours d'Amman même. Ils viennent parfois des autres villes de Jordanie et sont obligés de refaire à l'envers les kilomètres faits le matin pour se rendre à la gare routière. Bredouilles, bloqués, écourés.

La plupart d'entre eux sont des personnes assez âgées.

Les moins de 35 ans n'ont pas le droit en effet de traverser le pont sauf à rester pour au moins neuf mois dans leur zone de destination, ce qui les dissuade souvent de le faire.

Osama, 35 ans, raconte. Il est parti du Koweït au moment des premiers bombardements et n'a rigoureusement aucune famille en Jordanie: tous ses parents vivent en Palestine. Non seulement il ne peut pas les rejoindre mais il n'a plus un fils en poche (autre que l'argent nécessaire pour le voyage) et doit se débrouiller comme il peut pour passer la nuit aux abords de la gare routière. «Chaque jour, explique-t-il, je vois un petit groupe partir... Et moi j'attends».

Beaucoup de gens font le choix de partir sans autorisation jusqu'au pont par leurs propres moyens, mais arrivés là-bas ils sont bloqués et n'ont plus qu'à dormir dans les mosquées ou à la belle étoile.

Pour mettre fin à cette situation angoissante et pénible, les candidats au voyage ont tenté de faire appel à la Croix-Rouge, lui demandant d'acheter un car spécial qui les emmènerait tous, sous sa protection, de l'autre côté du Jourdain. On leur a répondu que la Croix-Rouge ne pouvait intervenir que dans des cas d'urgence bien définis, notamment pour sauver des blessés, mais qu'elle était dans l'incapacité de résoudre ce type de problème.

Soudain, un policier s'approche avec les papiers roses qui matérialisent ici l'espoir de pouvoir rentrer chez soi. On soupire, on s'approche de lui: les autorités du pont ont téléphoné et autorisent trente personnes à passer. C'est le fruit, pour aujourd'hui, des négociations qui ont lieu chaque matin entre les policiers d'Abdali et le pont. Des négociations à distance, qui visent à ne pas faire partir trop de gens inutilement jusqu'au pont en limitant le nombre des départs à celui des autorisations qui seront accordées. En un clin d'œil, tout le monde embarque dans les taxis qui ne tardent pas à filer... Youssef les regarde partir: «J'espère que cette fois c'est la bonne murmure-t-il». Il n'a pas envie de revoir sa sœur, ce soir, à Amman.

Jean-Marc Bordes

A L'AFFICHE

Pédagogie et musique

L'étendue d'une gamme simple

Il y a deux cents ans —le 5 décembre 1791 pour être précis— le compositeur autrichien Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart mourait. Pour les mélomanes de nos jours —musiciens et public— les accomplissements de ce génie, décédé à l'âge de 36 ans, sont encore un ravissement. Pour eux, un peu partout dans le monde, l'année 1991 s'inscrit comme l'année Mozart. En Jordanie, pays accablé par la crise du Golfe, les festivités envisagées par le directeur du Conservatoire National de Musique, Fondation Noor Al Hussein, ont malheureusement toutes été annulées. Pourtant, Kifah Fakhouri continue à faire découvrir à ses élèves les subtilités de cette musique sublime.

Le Jourdain: Quelle est sa partition préférée? Kifah Fakhouri: Sans doute la sérénade baptisée «une petite musique de nuit», Émile Kleine Nachtmusik, résumé de l'art de Mozart, et modèle éminent de sa simplicité inimitable. Un violoniste qui vient d'achever une formation de deux ans peut déjà la jouer. Cela dit, c'est au Requiem, dernier verbatim de cette imagination remarquable, qu'il faut s'intéresser pour se rendre compte de la totalité de son talent: son emploi complexe d'harmonies, de contrepoints, d'instruments et de voix. Il faut remarquer aussi la valeur historique de cette œuvre se situant à la charnière de deux époques: le baroque de Bach qu'elle fait preuve d'avoir assimilé et l'allusion qu'elle fait, par ses structures, aux tentatives de Beethoven au XIX^{ème} siècle, préfiguration du romantisme.

LJ: On sait de Mozart qu'il a commencé à composer dès l'âge de six ans. Est-ce qu'un élève du même âge avançant sur les pas du petit Wolfgang peut s'assurer une progression musicale comparable au fur et à mesure qu'il maîtrise l'ensemble des 626 compositions écrites par le musicien?

KF: Signalons d'abord que l'œuvre de Mozart fournit une matière idéale pour l'enseignement de la musique. Formulée d'après les principes du classicisme, ce sont des modèles de sobriété et de précision. Les thèmes mélodiques sont clairs, l'harmonie est simple et la suite des idées musicales limpide. Cela dit, on constate que l'étude de ses partitions musicales dans un ordre chronologique n'a rien à voir avec une progression artistique chez l'étudiant. Il y a des compositions de la dernière période de Mozart qui sont plus efficaces en tant qu'exercices pour des débutants que celles de la première période. Mozart, dans sa maturité, résumait les principes d'une façon encore plus nette que dans son enfance.

LJ: Comment alors ces modèles sont-ils mis en pratique? KF: En partageant les exercices entre deux groupes d'étudiants, nous nous heurtons à un paradoxe. L'étude de Mozart est plus bénéfique aux débutants compositeurs qu'interprètes. C'est que la simplicité de Mozart dévoile à l'élève les progrès d'une idée musicale. On peut dire que Mozart n'a écrit que des gammes. Mais c'est justement cette simplicité heureuse qui devient exigeante au moment de l'interprétation, acte qui vise à marier les gammes des sentiments à la technique. Trouver l'intonation juste demande une grande maturité. Et c'est la raison pour laquelle, au Conservatoire, nous n'introduisons Mozart pour les interprètes qu'à une étape avancée de leur instruction.

LJ: Un musicien jordanien, s'exprimant dans une locution orientale, qu'a-t-il à apprendre de Mozart?

KF: Rien du tout. Je voudrais toutefois préciser ce jugement. Si je dis qu'il n'y a aucune raison pour qu'un musicien arabe s'acharne à étudier Mozart, c'est que son vocabulaire musical appartient à un ordre culturel qui est loin d'être celui de la musique occidentale. Il peut trouver la maturité sans avoir assimilé les leçons du classicisme auquel Mozart appartient. C'est dans la mesure où un tel musicien voudrait élargir sa connaissance d'instruments divers que l'œuvre de Mozart peut offrir un très bel exemple.

LJ: Est-ce que le fait que Mozart ait été si jeune un musicien accompli est un fait significatif pour un enseignant de musique? KF: C'est un fait utile. Au Conservatoire, nous constatons que c'est un moyen de persuader les parents hésitants à inscrire leurs enfants à un âge qu'ils estiment souvent trop précoce. Cela s'est aussi révélé une incitation efficace pour les élèves récalcitrants. Ayant le même âge qu'eux, Mozart est perçu comme un égal et a l'heur d'éveiller en eux un esprit de compétition.

Propos recueillis par Sami Kamal

TELEVISION

DIMANCHE

18h00 - «Des chiffres et des lettres». Jeu.
18h30 - «L'école des fans». Des enfants interprètent le répertoire d'un chanteur célèbre.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - «Faut pas rêver». Documentaire.

LUNDI

18h00 - La Camorra. Série policière.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Magazine sportif hebdomadaire.

MARDI

18h00 - «Les rats laveurs», dessin animé.
18h30 - «Fusion». Magazine documentaire.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - «Aujourd'hui en Jordanie». Magazine local préparé et présenté par Saleh Madi.

MERCREDI

18h00 - «Thalassa». Le magazine de la mer.
18h30 - «Sixième gauche». Nouvel épisode d'une série de 50 qui raconte la cohabitation, dans le même immeuble, d'une famille de Français d'origine algérienne et d'une famille franco-française.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - «Carnet de notes». Extraits de musique classique.

JEUDI

18h00 - «Snorky». Dessin animé.
18h30 - «Splendeur sauvage». Documentaire sur la vie des animaux.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Reportage.

VENDREDI

18h00 - «Pour tout l'or du Transvaal». Nouvel épisode d'une série documentaire en six parties consacrée à la lutte qui oppose les soldats britanniques aux fermiers hollandais au début de ce siècle en Afrique australe.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Documentaire.

SAMEDI

18h00 - «Quand la science mène l'enquête». Documentaire scientifique.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - «Carnet de notes». Extraits de musique classique.

libres propos

Mémoires d'une guerre

C'est dans la nuit de mercredi que la guerre a éclaté... Et alors? Rien! Personne n'était surpris. Après une longue attente, l'inévitable était enfin produit. On avait que c'était imminent, on pas parce que l'affaire était difficile à résoudre, mais parce que les deux parties en cause voulaient la guerre. On avait souffert de cette guerre-là.

A longueur de journée (ces ours-ci on a tendance à rester à la maison), on écoutait à radio, on lisait les journaux et on regardait la télévision. On n'imagine pas à quel point c'est épuisant. On reçoit la chaîne syrienne et la chaîne israélienne. Malgré les conseils du gouvernement de ne pas écouter ce que dit l'ennemi (Israël), je ne peux jamais résister à la tentation: c'est intéressant de savoir ce que les autres pensent et j'ai toujours été fascinée par l'habileté des gens à exagérer et à reformuler les nouvelles selon leurs intérêts propres. C'est plus fort que les exercices de style qu'on pratiquait à l'Université. On ne sait jamais quelle est la «vraie» vérité (si tant est qu'il en ait une).

La nuit suivante (deuxième jour du conflit armé) n'était plus intéressante. Je fus éveillée vers 3h du matin par la voix de mon père qui disait à ma mère de ne pas se déranger. Il faut avouer qu'il m'énervait d'être éveillée dans un lit où il criait les mots, ce qui avait suffi à me sortir de mon sommeil. Ma mère sautait d'un endroit à l'autre. Quelque chose s'était passé, je n'étais sûre. Les Israéliens venaient de bombarder Israël. J'étais contente, le peuple palestinien a beaucoup souffert à cause d'eux. Les Israéliens méritent plus que ça. Pour la première fois depuis très longtemps, un arabe nous avait vengés. Saddam Hussein (en oubliant ses vices et ses vertus, puisque personne n'est parfait) a su satisfaire notre amertume après des années de frustration. J'en suis fière.

Les Jordaniens et les Palestiniens sont les plus touchés économiquement par la guerre. On tient bon malgré les probabilités de mourir sous un raid aérien ou sous les gaz chimiques. Les étrangers en Jordanie sont privilégiés, ils ont des masques. On m'a dit que cela se vendait sur le marché, mais ça coûte cher. A 50 dinars le masque, ça ne sert à rien: ou on achète les masques et on meurt de faim

faute de sous, ou on économise et on meurt sous les gaz chimiques. En y pensant, je préfère les gaz, c'est plus rapide, on souffre moins.

Je ne comprends pas grand chose à la politique. D'ailleurs je ne cherche pas à comprendre: ça me donne des maux de tête. Mais parfois je tombe (volontairement et de bon gré) dans des cercles vicieux très intéressants. Je ne peux m'empêcher d'y penser indéfiniment: Pourquoi (dans le monde extérieur) le mot «arabe» signifie-t-il la plupart du temps «terroriste»? Pourquoi parle-t-on toujours d'une «agression» palestinienne et d'un «acte de défense» israélien? Pourquoi est-on choqué par le tournant sérieux que prennent les événements lorsque les Irakiens bombardent Israël alors qu'Israël est à la source de tout conflit dans cette région? Pourquoi est-ce la faute de l'Irak si le dernier plan français pour une solution pacifique a échoué alors que ce sont les Etats-Unis qui l'ont rejeté, une heure après qu'il eut été proposé.

Le jeu a commencé et les... masques sont tombés. Il ne nous reste qu'à suivre ensemble le reste de cette tragédie.

P.S.1: Ils sont très démocratiques, là-bas, aux Etats-Unis. Ils refusent de présenter les communiqués condamnant la guerre sous prétexte que le contexte est particulier. Pourquoi une telle précaution si l'on est si sûr de ce que l'on fait?

P.S.2: Vive les patriotes jordaniens: ils sont partis, ont quitté le pays, se sont enfuis ailleurs, dans le but évident de rester sains et saufs jusqu'à la fin de la guerre et de pouvoir revenir ensuite pour aider à la reconstruction du pays.

P.S.3: Où sont les Koweïtiens? Pourquoi ont-ils besoin des étrangers pour libérer leur pays? Que font-ils pendant que les Anglais, les Américains et les Français (entre autres) défendent leur pays? Une majorité d'entre eux sont aux Etats-Unis, en France et en Angleterre, pour surveiller la situation de loin, pour prendre des mesures de sécurité et des décisions définitives, pour pouvoir surtout, si la guerre s'étend, émigrer en Chine ou au Pôle Sud, par exemple.

Inas Nammari

Sans blague!

Le tribunal du Seigneur

musulmans qu'il trouvait encore plus coupables que lui-même, mais il fut interrompu par le Bon Dieu:

«Leurs dossiers sont presque aussi répugnants que celui de Shamir. Mahomet, ici présent, a décrété que ceux-ci ne faisaient plus partie de ses fidèles. De plus, aucun autre prophète n'a voulu intercéder en leur faveur.»

«Même pas Moïse?», s'étonna Bush.

«Même pas Moïse. Mais trêve de questions! vous allez écouter avec attention ce que j'ai à vous dire. J'exige que vous arrêtiez immédiatement votre génocide inouï contre l'Irak, que vous empêchiez les Israéliens de perpétrer leurs agressions continuelles contre les Palestiniens, les Libanais et les Syriens du Golan et que vous contribuiez activement à instaurer une paix juste et durable au Moyen-Orient. Quant au Koweït, ma volonté est qu'il fasse partie de l'Irak. Ne vous mêlez plus de remettre un prince féodal et corrompu sur son trône. Je vous laisse quelques minutes pour réfléchir.»

Bush était absolument furieux: A travers cette guerre, qu'il s'était attelé avec application à rendre «juste», il n'essayait que d'implanter un nouvel ordre mondial, ordre dans lequel son pays tiendrait naturellement la première place!

Par ailleurs, Maggie, et plus tard Major, s'étaient acharnés en suivant aveuglément Bush à essayer d'obtenir pour leur pays une bonne deuxième place dans ce nouvel ordre, mais ils savaient que Bush serait obligé en définitive de placer Israël avant eux. N'empêche, la Grande-Bretagne devait à tout prix prendre la troisième place, devant l'Allemagne et surtout la France!

Quant à Mitterrand, il finit par comprendre que les Arabes et les Musulmans figuraient en toute dernière place dans le nouvel ordre mondial de Bush (juste après le Zaïre et l'Inde). Il se résigna avec réticence à joindre la coalition montée par l'administration américaine, rien que pour garantir à la France une place avancée dans ce nouvel ordre, et aussi pour s'assurer quelques milliards que certains princes du pétrole, frappés d'une soudaine crise d'insanité, s'étaient mis à distribuer à droite et à gauche.

Après ce qu'ils venaient d'entendre, les trois hommes restaient plongés dans leurs pensées. Mitterrand finit par rompre le silence: «Je suis d'accord avec le Bon Dieu. Dans le nouvel ordre, donnons aux Arabes et aux Israéliens la même place!»

«Moi aussi, je suis d'accord», dit Major, qui commençait à se féliciter de la démarche du Bon Dieu. «La Grande-Bretagne est maintenant sûre de prendre au moins la deuxième place. Avec les Israéliens en dernière place aux côtés des Arabes, mes hooligans pourraient mener ces idiots de cow-boys par le bout du nez et peut-être se hisser

à la première place», pensait-il avec satisfaction.

«Vous êtes fous, tous les deux, s'écria Bush. Il n'est pas question de hisser les Arabes à la deuxième place! Vous vous rendez compte, ajouta-t-il avec dégoût en pensant à Saddam: un Arabe, musulman qui plus est, à la deuxième place, et peut-être un jour à la première!»

Mitterrand et Major comprirent que Bush, pour des raisons d'ordre électoral, surtout, ne pouvait pas donner aux Israéliens moins que la deuxième place. En plus, il leur était clair que ce pauvre Bush avait subi un lavage de cerveau soigné: il portait dans son cœur une crainte malade pour tout ce qui était arabe ou musulman. Il ne leur restait plus qu'à suivre Bush, quitte à désobéir au Bon Dieu!

Mitterrand ne s'en inquiétait pas outre mesure. «Lorsque la crise sera terminée j'arriverai bien à obtenir l'absolution du pape, pensait-il. Il semble que ce drôle de Saint-Père polonais prenne ses instructions directement de la CIA et qu'il ne soit pas vraiment contre cette guerre. Dommage que Bush et Major ne soient pas catholiques!»

Quant à Major, qui n'avait que quarante sept ans, il se disait que le Bon Dieu finirait bien par lui pardonner d'ici vingt ou trente ans, bien avant que l'heure de quitter ce bas monde ne sonne pour lui.

Bush, lui, ne s'inquiétait pas outre mesure de la colère du Bon Dieu. En bon Texan, l'argent et le pétrole comptaient pour lui bien plus que le Bon Dieu et tous ses saints!

Jesus regarda Bush avec stupeur. «Je croyais vous avoir appris à aimer votre prochain!», s'exclama-t-il avec reproche. Néanmoins Bush restait obstiné. Il pensait encore une fois à ce Saddam qui avait osé le braver publiquement. Aucun dirigeant musulman n'avait osé braver d'une telle façon un président américain. Même pas Nasser! «Pas moyen, dit-il, je dois écraser cet individu, coûte que coûte».

Voyant l'attitude de Bush, Jésus pria son père de donner encore une dernière chance aux trois hommes.

La voix du Bon Dieu se fit entendre: «Je vous donne encore quelques semaines pour que la justice et la paix règnent sur tout le Moyen-Orient. En particulier, Israël, votre création, doit reprendre la taille qu'il mérite: celle d'une grenouille. J'en ai assez de vous voir le gonfler pour le faire apparaître comme un bœuf. De plus, je ne veux plus voir aucun de ceux qu'a renié mon prophète Mohammad en poste. Si ce que je viens de vous dire n'est pas exécuté, vous subirez la plus honteuse des défaites dans les déserts d'Arabie.»

Sabri Farah

Egypt raises cigarette prices

CAIRO (R) — Egypt raised the prices of basic consumer commodities Saturday on the eve of a mission to Washington to discuss the Gulf war and economic reform.

The price of a standard pack of 20 domestically-produced cigarettes rose 15 piastres (five cents) to 1.30 pounds (44 cents). Local newspapers said the increase would generate 200 million pound (\$69 million) in state revenue.

The government has taken several measures towards freeing the economy to win the approval of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for its reform programme.

Earlier this month it introduced short-term treasury bills as part of plans to free interest rates, a key IMF demand.

Cabinet Affairs Minister Atef Obeid is due to leave for Washington Sunday for talks with U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady and IMF and World Bank officials.

Cabinet sources told Reuters he would review results of the latest round of almost three years of negotiations with IMF officials.

Egypt needs an agreement with the IMF to allow it to go to the Paris Club of creditor nations to reschedule part of its estimated \$36 billion dollar debt.

But Western economists say the IMF is insisting Egypt first implement a promised reform of its currency regulations and introduce a new sales tax to help close a huge budget deficit.

Prices of broad beans, a staple food for most Egyptians, also rose by about 13 per cent.

Oil prices find equilibrium around \$20

LONDON (R) — Oil prices, which tumbled after the outbreak of the Gulf war last week, seem to have settled at around \$20 a barrel and analysts said Friday they would probably stay there for the time being.

"It's difficult to see why the price should move much either way at the moment," said Mike Barry, analyst with Energy Market Consultants in London.

"I think the market's tired today. People have been living on adrenalin for the last two weeks," another analyst said.

Oil surged briefly to about \$35

a barrel when the first allied planes began bombing Baghdad and other Iraqi targets on Jan. 17.

But the price quickly plunged on initial optimism that the war could be short. Since then the release of international oil stocks has offset the rising fear of a longer conflict and prices have been less volatile.

At 1700 GMT Friday the March contract for North Sea Brent blend, the crude oil benchmark, was priced in London \$20.30 per barrel, seven cents under Thursday's close, after the thinnest day's trading since

Christmas.

"It's been a zero day," one futures broker said.

And on New York's Mercantile Exchange the March light crude oil futures contract was up just seven cents at \$21.80, again in very light trade.

"It's funny, since the war began it's got quieter and quieter," one source with a Japanese trading house said.

After a brief scare when soaring tanker insurance costs slowed shipping traffic into the Gulf, Saudi Arabian and Iranian oil

exports have been getting back to normal.

And both countries have some 70-80 million barrels of oil in tanker storage close ready to sell to consumers if supplies are disrupted, industry sources said.

That means the market is well supplied until well into the second quarter — seasonally the weakest period for oil demand.

"Oil so far has not been affected by the Gulf war. But at some point there will be a scare," one analyst said.

In the meantime, prices are likely to drift.

Lloyd's cuts sea cargo rates to Jordan

LONDON (AP) — The Lloyd's of London insurance market Friday increased insurance rates for air cargoes worldwide but cut rates for sea cargoes going to Israel and Jordan.

The upward move reflected increased concern about possible terrorism attacks on commercial aircraft because of the Gulf war. The cuts reflected fewer fears about fighting in Israel and Jordan.

The market's war risk rating committee increased air cargo rates to 0.275 per cent of the value of the cargo, from 0.02 per cent worldwide, except where otherwise specified.

For sea cargoes going to Israeli Mediterranean ports the rate was cut to 0.5 per cent from 0.75 per cent.

For Israeli Red Sea ports and Jordan the rate was cut to 0.375 from 0.5 per cent.

Cargo insurance rates are regularly set by the war risks rating committee, which is a joint body of Lloyd's of London and the Institute of London Underwriters.

Rationing of meat and vodka to begin in Moscow in March

MOSCOW (AP) — Officials announced Friday that meat, grains, vodka and wine will be rationed in the Soviet capital. The move was a stark acknowledgment that they expect the local economy of near worthless money and empty stores to worsen this winter.

President Mikhail Gorbachev's decree taking 50- and 100-rouble notes out of circulation disrupted banks and commerce for a third day, and rumours swept the capital of impending price increases.

The national government said it was allowing retirees until Sunday to exchange their large bills for smaller currency. Thursday, four republics, including the Russian Federation, said they would give residents past the Friday deadline to exchange their notes.

The dispute appeared likely to worsen already sour relations between the Kremlin and the 15 Soviet republics, led by the Russian Federation. Russia said Thursday it would allow its citizens until Feb. 1 to change their money.

Russia has also issued a directive that apparently would head off any move by the national government to raise prices. The directive freezes retail prices in the Soviet Union's largest republic at

Jan. 1 levels, allows increases in wholesale prices, and establishes credits from the republic's bank to make up the difference.

"The shelves of Moscow stores are just as empty as in other cities of the country," said a dispatch in the Rabochaya Tribuna newspaper.

"Now, after long discussions, the Moscow city council decided to introduce coupons for meat, lard, sausage, grains, vodka and wine," said the report, quoting council chairman Yuri Luzhkov.

Rationing will begin March 1, and the city will decide before the beginning of every month how much of each rationed item it can offer to its nine million residents, the report said.

Tobacco and sugar have long been rationed in Moscow. Nearly all food items are rationed in the country's second-largest city, Leningrad, and in many other cities.

The news report quoted Luzhkov as guaranteeing consumers that the rationed goods will appear on store shelves.

In a gloomy interview with the TASS news agency, Leonid Abalkin, Gorbachev's former top economic adviser, said Soviet citizens were not prepared for a market economy.

"People's mentality is based on myths," Abalkin said. "People expect a miracle from the market, or at least an extremely rapid improvement of the situation."

Abalkin also told TASS that Gorbachev backed away from a crash 500-day plan to transform the Soviet Union into a market economy because he believed it would lead to the disintegration of the Soviet Union and a reduction of his own power.

The decision to give senior citizens more time to turn in their large rouble notes after the government's surprise Tuesday announcement taking them out of circulation did not change the 200-rouble limit they can exchange.

Many elderly Soviets do not trust banks and keep thousands of roubles at home. Officials said they were pulling the notes out of circulation to disrupt the black market.

TASS reported Friday that a prisoner in a far east labour camp, identified as Alexei Maksimkin, took the headmistress of the camp's school hostage when he heard about the rouble reform.

He demanded a bullet-proof vest and a four-wheel drive vehicle.

TASS said sharpshooters shot and killed him, and freed the hostage, apparently unharmed.

U.S. economy shrinks in fourth quarter of '90

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy, buffeted by the Gulf crisis, took a nosedive in the final three months of 1990, a government report showed Friday. Economists saw it as confirmation of at least a moderate recession, with what one termed "a list of risks ... a mile long" ahead.

The Commerce Department said that the Gross National Product (GNP) — the country's total output of goods and services — fell at an annual rate of 2.1 per cent from October through December.

It was the biggest GNP drop since the depths of the 1981-82 recession, and was primarily attributable to a huge \$21 billion fall-off in consumer spending.

Americans worried about the state of the economy and the situation in the Middle East cut back purchases of everything from autos to groceries.

The administration of U.S. President George Bush blamed Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait for the slump and maintained that the country would only suffer two quarters of negative GNP before growth resumed.

in the spring.

That would make the current recession shorter than the 11-month average of the eight previous downturns since the end of World War II.

"Barring a major turn for the worse in the Gulf, odds are that the recession should be relatively brief in magnitude and duration," said Commerce Undersecretary Michael Darby.

Darby said the administration was pinning its hopes for a quick recovery on demand for U.S. exports remaining strong, a relatively low level of unsold business inventories and the hope that the Federal Reserve will have more room to lower interest rates because inflationary pressures are easing.

However, private analysts were not nearly as certain that the country would be out of a recession that soon by spring. They said that even if the Gulf war does end quickly, there are other factors, such as the problems with the country's financial system, that are dragging down economic growth.

Analysts noted that major U.S. trading partners, including Bri-

tain and Canada, are also in a recession, thus threatening the export boom which provided what little strength the economy exhibited last year.

They also worried that consumers and businesses, already saddled with a huge debt load from the 1980s, may not be quick to resume spending, especially for big-ticket purchases such as cars and homes.

"From the GNP report, the economy looks to be in a moderate recession, but the list of risks is a mile long," said Allen Sinai, chief economist of the Boston Co. "The jury is still out on when and how the recovery will be p-

pen." For all of 1990, the GNP grew a barely perceptible 0.9 per cent, compared to a 2.5 per cent increase in 1989. It was the worst showing since GNP fell 2.5 per cent during the severe 1987 recession.

Many economists believe the economy was headed for a recession even before the invasion of Kuwait sent oil prices soaring and consumer confidence plummet-

Gulf war inspires Taiwanese gamblers and businessmen

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Gambling on the Gulf war has become a craze in Taiwan, where businessmen also have capitalised on the conflict.

Bookies say the most popular bets are: When will a ground war start? When will Israel launch retaliatory strikes against Iraq? Will the U.S.-led forces win?

Gambling is illegal but more than 10 per cent of Taiwan's 20 million people are estimated to patronise bookies, who run underground operations. They can win 500 times the amount they bet.

"Taiwan has become the second battlefield of the Middle East war," proclaimed the caption of a newspaper cartoon showing villagers betting.

Taiwanese have become obsessed with gambling in recent years because they have few entertainment outlets despite their increasing wealth.

The business and military sectors have also been affected. Factories in Taiwan say they have been busy filling orders for military uniforms, tents and gas masks for the allied forces.

One company said it received an order from Saudi Arabia for 200,000 handkerchiefs, presumably for use on captured Iraqi soldiers.

Other enterprises also sought to capitalise on the war to promote sales.

A motorcycle company advertised that its customers would not have to worry about gasoline price hikes resulting from the conflict because motorcycles use less gas than cars.

A seafood restaurant chain slashed prices on meals in an attempt to lessen worries that the war would cause inflation to worsen.

Turkey bans strikes for one month

ISTANBUL (R) — The Turkish government has banned all strikes for one month, the semi-official Anatolian News Agency reported Saturday.

The ban affects about 105,000 workers.

Nearly half of them are miners at the Black Sea town of Zonguldak who have been out since Nov. 30 demanding pay rises of more than 800 per cent over two years.

The government said the ban was imposed for security reasons.

It also prolonged strikes had brought suffering to workers. Miners started a march to Ankara early this month but were stopped by security forces.

"They (the government) are continuing the hostile attitude towards workers," said Semsi Denizler, leader of the miners' union. "There is no national security excuse or any health excuse for this."

Turk-Is, the main trade union confederation which organised a one-day stoppage by nearly 1.5 million members on Jan. 13, said the government's decision was an abuse of workers' rights.

"Workers' suffering cannot be prevented by putting off the strikes," for more pay since Jan. 10.

In the private sector, more than 45,000 members of independent unions staged strikes in iron and steel plants, car, and cable and wire factories during late December and early January.

About 85,000 other metal workers ended a month-old strike Friday after winning pay rises of between 150 and 304 per cent.

Japanese car sales set record

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's motor vehicle sales rose by 7.1 per cent to 5.98 million in 1990 despite lagging sales in the last two months, the Japan Automobile Dealers Association has said.

An association official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said 1990 sales totaled 1,306,711 passenger cars, up 7.1 per cent; 1,613,153 trucks, up 7.6 per cent; and 21,925 buses, up 5.9 per cent from 1989.

The official said the industry had been expecting a 1990 total of six million motor vehicles after sales in the first six months rose 13.1 per cent from a year earlier to 3,057,111 amid domestic business prosperity.

But sales declined by 2.7 per cent from a year earlier to 198,563 in November and dropped by 2.0 per cent to 163,221 in December.

EC warns of disaster if trade talks fail

PUNTA DEL ESTE, Uruguay (R) — The world's trading system could collapse, splintering into protectionist regional blocs, unless new rules are drafted by March, a top European Community (EC) official said Friday.

European Commission Vice-President Frans Andriessen said it was essential that negotiations being held under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) be resumed quickly.

The negotiations have been deadlocked since Dec. 8 because of a disagreement between the European Community and agricultural exporting countries, including the United States, about farm subsidies.

"Failure of the round would be disastrous for the world trading system," Andriessen told reporters. "A risk of the world being divided into trading blocs would be very likely ... and protectionism, be it national or regional, would be strongly stimulated."

He said an agreement must be struck by March 1, the deadline set by the U.S. Congress for a new accord under the Uruguay Round of talks, which began at this resort in 1986.

U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills said Friday that the Gulf war will not distract the Bush administration from seeking a pact to reform world trade.

"We are confronting in an international collaboration a very grave problem in the Middle East," Hills said. "That does not mean we do not pay attention to economic issues."

"My president is able to consider two issues at the same time with very little difficulty," she said.

Banks and brokers brace for heavy weather this year

AMSTERDAM (R) — The world's bankers and brokers, already shivering, will need to button their overcoats more tightly in 1991 to protect against the chill winds of recession.

After the booming 1980s, financial services companies are slashing jobs, retreating from riskier business and searching for safer sources of income and straining to shore up their capital and to contain bad debts.

Industry analysts and executives see another year of gloom and austerity for the world's financial houses following on the declines of 1990.

"The latter part of the '80s were very good years — full of

hope and optimism. Now the banks are picking up the tab," said Graham Jinks of London brokerage house Barclays de Zoete Wedd.

Many others agree. "A number of international banks may well have to pay a steep price for their frivolous behaviour of the 1980s," said Herman Wijffels, chairman of the Dutch Rabobank.

The litany of woes troubling financiers is long: Slowing economic growth, slumping stock and property markets, high interest rates, business failures that have left them with soured loans, over-extended consumer borrowers, a drop in the number of lucrative corporate deals and excess capacity.

"I believe 1991 will be rougher than 1990 for the banks. Most businesses are in a more desperate situation than they've been in for a very long time. I've never known people to be so gloomy," Malcolm Williamson, executive director of U.K.-based Standard Chartered Bank, recently told a British newspaper.

The crisis first surfaced in the United States. Now it is hitting even the big Japanese banks and securities houses, once thought to be invincible. The share prices of many major banks, such as Citicorp and Sumitomo Bank, have halved in the past year and profits are down almost as much.

In Europe, Britain has suffered severely but continental institutions appear to be affected less, analysts said.

A global "credit crunch" has followed as banks become reluctant to lend to any but the strongest borrowers and demand higher margins on loans that they do make.

"We're in the midst of a pronounced credit contraction. Everyone is pulling in their horns," said analyst Matthew Czeplewicz of Credit Suisse First Boston in London.

Brokers, too, are reluctant to put their own capital at risk and many have pulled out of such businesses as risk arbitrage, in which they speculated on takeover stocks.

As the climate worsens, analysts predict more banks and brokerage houses will go out of business or be forced to merge.

"A lot of banks in this world are going to vanish. In the next five to 10 years, probably half are going to disappear, although many of those will be very small," said Czeplewicz.

Mergers among New York's major commercial banks, once unimaginable, are now likely. Chemical Bank and Manufacturers Hanover are tipped as likely candidates, either with each other

or with other banks, analysts say. They expect further consolidation around the world among banks, brokers and savings institutions.

"The strong will acquire, the weak cooperate," said analyst William Vincent of UBS Phillips and Drew in London.

Defensive moves by banks to link with insurers will also accelerate. For banks, such ties come from a desire to increase revenues from less risky businesses while strengthening their capital bases.

The trend has already gained pace in Europe, where U.S. and Japanese-style regulatory restrictions are no obstacle.

In November Dutch insurer Nationale-Nederlanden N.V. and NMB Postbank Group N.V. unveiled merger plans in one of the biggest such deals to date.

Financial companies also cope with hard times by returning to basics. They are foregoing the lofty global ambitions of the 1980s in favour of core businesses expected to earn steady returns and rebuilding long-term client relationships.

Gone are the days when banks and brokers grew fat, almost overnight, on lucrative fees generated by blockbuster mergers and acquisitions. Banks had relaxed lending standards and some even financed hostile takeover of longtime clients.

That has been replaced by a fresh zeal for so-called "relationship banking", recognising the importance of nurturing customer loyalties and developing reliable sources of business.

Financial firms are no longer captivated by the idea of expanding around the globe and are devoting far less energy to devising exotic new financial instruments.

"Banks are focusing on their strengths. They no longer have time for grand plans that won't pay off well 1995," said Country Natwest USA analyst Stephen Berman in New York.

Cost-cutting is also becoming more urgent and firms are making massive layoffs to cut costs. Wall Street brokerages have cut 40,000 jobs since the 1987 stock market crash and analysts say another 40,000 are likely to go in the next few years.

Underscoring all this is a severe shortage of the capital that provides the financial foundation enabling a firm to weather tough times.

Analysts said the crisis is most acute in the U.S. and Japan. But commercial banks must build their capital to meet international standards which come into force in 1993.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Saturday, January 26, 1991

Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell
U.S. dollar	665.0	669.0
Pound Sterling	1301.1	1308.9
Deutschmark	446.4	449.1
Swiss franc	326.7	329.9
French franc	131.2	132.1
Japanese yen (for 100)	501.7	504.7
Dutch guilder	395.8	398.2
Swedish crown	119.4	120.1
Italian lira (for 100)	59.4	59.8
Belgian franc (for 10)	216.5	217.8

"Workers' suffering cannot be prevented by putting off the strikes," for more pay since Jan. 10.

In the private sector, more than 45,000 members of independent unions staged strikes in iron and steel plants, car, and cable and wire factories during late December and early January.

About 85,000 other metal workers ended a month-old strike Friday after winning pay rises of between 150 and 304 per cent.

TODAY AT

Cinema **CONCORD** Tel: 677420

LAMBADA

Performances: 3:30, 5:00, 6:45, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema **RAINBOW** Tel: 625155

Tom Cruise in **LOSIN' IT**

Performances: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 p.m.

Cinema **CONCORD** Tel: 677420

LAMBADA

Performances: 3:30, 5:00, 6:45, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema **PHILADELPHIA** Tel: 634144

TOTAL RECALL

Performances: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30

Cinema **NIJOM** Tel: 675571

TOTAL RECALL

Performances: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.
Friday & Sunday extra show at 11:00 a.m.

Cinema **PLAZA** Tel: 699238

Adel Imam in **TIT FOR TAT**

Performances: 12:00, 3:00, 5:15, 7:15, 9:15

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ANNOUNCEMENT

- Post: Domestic Assistant of Embassy Residence
- Basic functions: Cleaning
- Requirements: Receiving phone calls, Coming of age, Be able to read & write, Experience in similar works.
- Trial: In case of not being Jordanian, "Resident Permit" should be valid.
- Salary: Interview in Clancy, According to functions, around JD 360
- Applied Law: Jordanian Labour Law
- Presentation of applications: P.O. Box 454 — Amman, Tel. 622140, 624187. For fifteen days from the date of today.

Enclose: Curriculum vitae or biodata, Two pictures, Photocopy of Identity Card.

Latvia buries victims of military attack

Soviet army releases five Lithuanians; 3 in hospital

VILNIUS, Soviet Union (Agencies) — Three employees of Lithuania's parliament were in hospital after being beaten up by Soviet soldiers and a fourth man was still in detention, a spokesman for the parliament said Saturday.

Audrius Azubalis said five of the six Lithuanians detained by Soviet troops near Vilnius Thursday night had been released.

But three of them, who work for the Baltic republic's pro-independence parliament, were in hospital recovering from their injuries, he said.

"They are suffering from concussion, one seriously, and doctors suspect a fractured skull," he said. Soldiers seized the six and three British reporters after an alleged shooting incident between an armoured column and two Lithuanian cars Thursday night outside Vilnius.

The journalists were freed unharmed after three hours, but young Soviet soldiers punched, kicked and slapped the six Lithuanians and detained them.

Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis demanded their release Friday, comparing them to prisoners of war.

Azubalis quoted the army as saying it would keep one of those arrested in detention for three days as he had been carrying a pistol.

The man had been carrying money for the Lithuanian government to the city of Kaunas and Azubalis said: "We know he had a permit for his gun."

Azubalis said the commander of the Soviet garrison in Vilnius, Major-General Vladimir Uskhopchik, had accused the Lithuanian government Friday of failing to maintain public order.

He said Uskhopchik wrote in a letter to the republic's parliament that as a result "the situation in the Vilnius garrison is getting more and more out of control."

"An army which is no longer under control is very dangerous," Azubalis commented. "I don't know if this is a threat."

Tension between the Soviet Armed Forces and the Lithuanian government has been high since troops killed 13 unarmed civilians while forcibly occupying the Vilnius television tower on Jan. 13.

The bloodshed, and the killing of five people in two incidents in neighbouring Latvia, sparked off a storm of protest from Soviet liberals and foreign governments.

Some have threatened to suspend aid to the Soviet Union.

In the Latvian capital Riga, where tens of thousands attended the funeral Friday of three people killed in a clash with Soviet "black beret" special forces, only four guards were left to look after the fortified parliament building.

In Moscow, the Soviet Defence and Interior Ministries said Friday that beginning Feb. 1 they would start forming joint patrols in Riga and other major cities.

The move highlighted the military's determination to impose order on the country. All of the Soviet Union's 15 republics have declared some form of autonomy from Moscow, and the three Baltic republics of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have been at the forefront of the independence movement.

Caskets of the three Latvians were carried through Riga's streets to a slender granite pillar in the middle of the city's main avenue. The pillar is topped with a copper statue of Mother Latvia, with her arms stretching toward the sky.

"Latvia, which had only showed itself to be an example of the peaceful, democratic development of society without violence, nevertheless has been plunged into violence by the dark forces of the centre," said Prime Minister Ivars Godmanis.

In the Soviet Union, the "centre" is a common euphemism for Moscow and the national government.

Yeltsin, interviewed on American television, predicted the army would not back a broad-scale military crackdown if Gorbachev ordered one.

For this reason, "some of the troops, airborne troops, have been put in the command of the KGB and taken from the command of the army itself," Yeltsin said.

Asked about conditions in the Soviet Union, he replied, "crisis? Yes. Verge of civil war? Yes. It has not yet reached the state of catastrophe."

He said the four largest Soviet republics — Russia, Byelorussia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan — would form their own separate union if the Kremlin chief attempted to grab absolute power.

Yeltsin was virtually ignored by senior U.S. officials when he visited Washington in September 1989. But increasingly they have warmed to him, admired his political skills and sought a relationship with him.

Yeltsin may be the Soviet Union's most popular politician and many U.S. officials say he may be the only leader capable of succeeding Gorbachev.

Referring at least in part to the recent Soviet troop crackdown against pro-independence forces in the Baltic republics, Yeltsin said: "The recent actions which have been on the increase indicate that he has been losing his common sense. And this is dangerous."

"How can it be possible to use troops against civilians at this time? Not only our country will turn away from him, but the whole world will turn away from him," he added.

Reins Koov, an aide to Prime Minister Edgar Savisaar, said he had information that specially trained troops from the heavily guarded Dvigatel Factory in southwestern Tallinn were preparing for an attack this week.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin Friday accused Gorbachev of "losing his common sense" and said he feared the Soviet Union was on the verge of civil war.

Tensions ran high in this most westward looking of the three Baltic republics after fatal attacks by Soviet troops in Lithuania and Latvia the past two weekends.

Friday was a day of mourning in Estonia for the four people killed in Latvia.

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Americans suffer war jitters

WASHINGTON (R) — America has a bad case of national war jitters.

People are ducking when cars backfire. Heads spin and people shake at fire alarms.

Bomb scares are increasing. Two a day are being reported in Houston alone and there have been some at the Pentagon too, closing corridors and elevators. Sharpshooters man the roof of the White House.

Some people, including those at one embassy, fear water is being contaminated. Others are convinced that underground railways have been mined.

It is difficult to buy a gas mask — anywhere. Houston people want their own bomb detection equipment and bullet-proof vests.

The FBI is asking people to report suspicious activity and has been interviewing thousands of Arab-Americans in a campaign to prevent Iraqi-inspired attacks.

So far, no incidents or arrests have been reported, but the watch goes on.

Unprecedented security precautions were in place at the Super Bowl football extravaganza at Tampa, Florida, with portable television sets and radios banned for more than 73,000 fans who will pass through special electronic checks.

In Washington, the showing of the 1977 movie Black Sunday about a terrorist attack at a fictional Super Bowl, was cancelled by a television station because of war concerns.

Air travel is down but the Amtrak Rail system reported only "brisk" but not unusually heavy rail traffic despite public fears of flying.

Although the United States is thousands of miles from the Gulf war zone, the domestic jitters appear to be a national affliction.

A Washington Post-ABC News poll showed that 28 per cent of Americans interviewed feared an attack. The figure rose to 61 per cent for those living in Washington.

"I treat a lot of people," said Dr. Joseph Margolin, an eminent psychologist and former head of behavioural studies at George Washington University.

"A lot of them are high government officials, some with adjustment problems," he said in an interview. "They're scared."

Some psychologists, including Margolin, blame the government and media, particularly television, for the jitters.

Margolin said the government should have foreseen the situation of fear and reassured people, telling them security precautions would be in place to protect them.

Television, he said, was dramatising the war. "They are doing a lot of stuff that's making things scary," he said.

President George Bush's wife Barbara also expressed concern about the effects of the war on children.

"I think parents should monitor their children and just be sure that they're understanding what they're seeing so they're not getting terrible nightmares," the first lady said.

From next Wednesday the American Psychological Association is setting up a national telephone hotline for people who want help from trained psychologists.

The American Academy of Paediatrics is also giving out advice and reassuring children such as an eight-year-old boy who has become concerned after watching television coverage of the war.

"I feel scared that they might blow up my block, and boom, my mom and everybody would be gone. Then there would be just me," said the boy.

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